

Hamas vows revenge for killings

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, vowed Saturday to take revenge on Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government for the police killing of two leaders this week. "The situation is becoming intolerable and Rabin is going beyond all limits," the statement sent to Reuters said. "We shall speak to him in the language he understands so well. The buzzing of bullets, explosions and booby-trapped cars. It added: "There will also be new methods. We won't reveal them in this statement. Rabin will know them at the appropriate time." The statement came after Israeli security forces shot dead two leaders of Qassam, the Hamas military wing. The killing of Imad Aqel, a militant commander in Gaza, on Wednesday sparked the worst violence in the occupied territories since the signing of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace accord on Sept. 13. Israeli troops killed one Arab and wounded 26 others (see page 10). Saturday was the last day to a three-day strike in the territories called by Hamas to mourn Aqel's killing. Security forces killed Khaled Al Zeir, another Qassam commander, in Arab East Jerusalem on Friday.

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Majall hold talks with Hussein

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majall Saturday received at his office the head of the Palestinian negotiating team to the Middle East peace talks, Faisal Hussein. During the meeting, they reviewed peace process in the region and Jordanian-Palestinian coordination. Mr. Hussein briefed the prime minister on his recent visit to Europe that was aimed at boosting the Middle East peace process.

Aideed may attend meeting on Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Somali warlord Mohammad Farah Aideed may attend a United Nations-sponsored humanitarian meeting on Somalia scheduled to open in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa on Monday, a U.N. spokesman said Saturday. General Aideed's faction, the Somali National Alliance (SNA), had earlier indicated that it would participate in the conference only if the U.N. peacekeeping force in Somalia (UNOSOM) freed suspected SNA militiamen. UNOSOM is still holding eight of Gen. Aideed's supporters, including his chief financier, Osman Ato. They are suspected of carrying out attacks on U.N. soldiers. U.N. spokesman Farouk Mawlawi said Gen. Aideed had expressed his willingness to attend the conference to Ethiopian mediators but had not yet confirmed he would go to Addis Ababa.

Iran wants to normalise Iraq ties

BEIRUT (AFP) — Iran wants to normalise ties with longtime foe Iraq and the exchange of visits by both countries' officials is part of that policy, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said in comments published Saturday. He told pro-Syrian Lebanese daily Al Safir: "We share 1,200 kilometres of borders with Iraq. We're neighbours. Why should our relations be strained? We want to establish good neighbourly ties and this requires an effort from both sides." Mr. Velayati noted that the two countries had reconciled following the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, and said Tehran had not let relations with Baghdad deteriorate because of the Gulf war in 1991. "We did not follow the United States' policy towards Iraq or anywhere else in the world," he said. In October, Deputy Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held high-level discussions with Iraqi officials in Baghdad. But a visit to Tehran by the Iraqi undersecretary of foreign affairs, Saad Abdul Majid Al Faisal, 10 days ago was postponed to an unspecified date, following a decision from Baghdad.

I killed by Algerian groups

ALGIERS (AFP) — Eight civilians were killed and three others wounded in Algeria by armed Islamic groups between Tuesday and Saturday, according to the Algerian security services. Of the eight dead, one, the cousin of the general secretary of Algerian unions was assassinated Saturday in Constantine, to the east. His elder brother was badly wounded in the attack. In a separate development, the security services said Saturday Mohammed Bouslimani, president of the charitable Islamic Organisation Al Ishaad Wa Al Ishaad, had been kidnapped Friday (see page 10).

Police seize uranium, wound Georgian sellers

MURSA, Turkey (AP) — Undercover police shot and wounded three Georgians who allegedly tried to sell them uranium, the Anatolia news agency said Saturday. Police seized 4.5 kilograms of uranium in the incident in the western city Thursday. Anatolia reported: The Georgians started shooting when they realised their "customers" were police, said the agency, noting provincial police commander Ahmet Demir. The smugglers had agreed on a price of \$675,000.

JD 1.487b 'no-deficit' draft budget unveiled

JD 1.33b local revenues; JD 1.13b current expenditures and JD 358m capital expenditures; no new taxes or fees

By P.V. Vivekanand
 Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Finance Minister Sami Gammoh Saturday unveiled a JD 1,487.1 million draft budget for fiscal year 1994, envisaging local revenues of JD 1,330.7 million and foreign aid of JD 156.4 million to produce the first "deficit-free" budget of the Kingdom. The budget, which now goes to Parliament, projects current expenditures of JD 1,284 million and capital expenditures of JD 358 million.

The draft registers an overall increase of 12 per cent over the projections in the 1993 budget while the actual increase is 11 per cent when compared to the reestimated figures of the 1993 budget. It reflects an increase of local revenues of 18 per cent over estimated 1993 figures, but an actual increase of 8.5 per cent.

Releasing some of the figures of the budget, Mr. Gammoh also pointed out that capital expenditure projections are 23 per cent higher than the reestimated figures of 1993 while the 1993 projection was

5.4 per cent. The JD 1,398 million 1993 budget estimated local revenues at JD 1,145 million; current expenditures were estimated at JD 1,058 million and capital expenditures at JD 340 million.

The 1993 budget also estimated foreign aid at JD 198 million and the net deficit was projected at JD 48 million. Reestimated figures for the 1993 budget, Mr. Gammoh told the Jordan Times, were: Total expenditures, JD 1,368 million; JD 1,176 million in local revenues, JD 1,075 million in current expenditures and JD 293 million in capital expenditures.

Mr. Gammoh told reporters that no new taxes or fees were envisaged, but the government hopes to enact a new sales tax law to replace the consumption tax law which went into effect in 1992.

Civil servants, who received an across-the-board JD 15-salary increase in 1993, will not get any increase in 1994, he said.

The sales tax law, he said, will make up for any shortfalls

in local revenues resulting from decrease in customs duties on imports. He noted that imports were likely to come down in 1994 as a result of higher local production.

Excluded from the budget are the estimated JD 800 million needed to service local and foreign debts and the unspecified expenditures to maintain the armed forces.

External and local financing will cover the debt servicing while, for the first time since 1990, Arab assistance is expected to cover the unspecified defence budget.

Mr. Gammoh declined to give the defence budget figures and the expected sources of funding, to cover the expenditures.

He said a budget supplement of JD 66 million was planned to help development and capital projects depending upon external aid. This allocation, as and when it materialises, is expected to finance "secondary projects" of various ministries and government departments.

"These are projects that need to be implemented, but



Sami Gammoh

cannot be financed except through grants or external soft loans," Mr. Gammoh, told the Jordan Times.

The finance minister also rejected criticism that the government was using external grants to support the budget at the expense of the private sector to which, the critics say, the funds were originally intended for.

"The foreign grants are intended for budget support and not earmarked or supposed to be channelled to the private sector," said the minister.

"In any event," he added, "the ultimate beneficiary will be the private sector" since the net objective of the budget is to serve the government's goal of serving the national economy.

Mr. Gammoh said the budget envisaged allocations to a governorate-by-governorate basis so as to advance the government's policy of decentralisation and achieving optimum benefits of the citizen.

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King's Speech from Throne is Cabinet's policy statement **House today sets confidence debate date**

By Ayman Al Safadi and Suhair Obaidat
 Jordan Times Staff Reporters

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament today sets date for a vote of confidence session after Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majall asked for a vote of confidence based on His Majesty King Hussein's Speech from the Throne.

Dr. Majall Thursday asked that the Speech, with which King Hussein opened the 12th Parliament on Nov. 23, be considered as the Cabinet's policy statement.

"I request that the speech from the Throne... be considered the policy statement on the basis of which the Cabinet asks for a vote of confidence from the House," Dr. Majall said in a letter to House Speaker Taher Al Masri.

Dr. Majall did not indicate in the letter whether he would reshuffle his cabinet prior to the confidence session, but most observers expect changes in a number of key portfolios.

Dr. Majall's request for a vote of confidence, however, technically rules out the possibility of the premier resigning and then seeking the legislature's confidence as head of a newly designated government.

Observers believe Dr. Majall would only introduce limited changes in the Cabinet, saying these changes would be in light of negotiations Dr. Majall is expected to hold with members of the House.

The Constitution stipulates that the government should seek the confidence of the House within 30 days after it convenes.

While deputies opposed to the Middle East peace process are expected to withhold confidence from Dr. Majall, the premier would be able to secure the confidence of the majority of lawmakers if he promises to meet what most observers characterise as demands related to the direct

Turkish gendarmes free Britons

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish security forces released 10 Britons Saturday after holding them for 26 hours when they went to the southeast to investigate alleged government atrocities against Kurds. A Freedomman and a Danish woman accompanying them were also freed. British officials said in London. "They are all freed and in good health. I believe they will leave the area soon," a British embassy spokeswoman said. Most of the Britons were trade unionists but she understood a few were journalists, she said. Several were women. They were visiting the area at the invitation of the Kurdish Solidarity Committee. In London, the husband of nurse Sarah Dally said: "She expected harassment. She knew that they were not just going to be allowed to speak to whom they wanted and to see what they wanted to see." "They didn't have the blessing of the authorities, there were going to be clandestine meetings (with Kurds)." Police picked up the group for questioning on Friday in Bitlis in the area. The British embassy believed they had gone missing, perhaps kidnapped by the guerrillas, after they were reported freed by police. But they turned up on Saturday in the custody of gendarmes in Diyarbakir.



Parliament in session Saturday (Photos by Youssef Al 'Allan)



needs of the electorate. Only the Islamic Action Front (IAF) and a small group of leftist deputies oppose Dr. Majall on ideological grounds. Their numbers, estimated at 30, however, will not enable them to pose a real challenge to Dr. Majall.

The premier is expected to hold negotiations with other parliamentary blocs in order to listen to their demands and curbing the confidence of the majority of lawmakers if he promises to meet what most observers characterise as demands related to the direct

istry of deputies to press the government hard on issues of bread and butter and demand policy adjustments that would improve the living standards of the electorate before giving a vote of confidence to the government.

The importance of these issues were demonstrated in the run-up to the Nov. 8 elections when issues of unemployment and poverty among other local issues overshadowed major political issues facing the country.

(Continued on page 10)

Arafat: Self-rule talks at impasse, but not collapsed

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said Saturday that peace talks were threatened by Israel's reluctance to withdraw its forces from Gaza Strip.

He said they must submit new proposals. The Israel-PLO talks on how to implement a peace accord and provide limited Palestinian self-rule in those areas have broken down before over the question of how far the Israeli troops will withdraw.

Mr. Arafat said that in talks on Friday "the other side has insisted on redeployment of the forces, not the withdrawal."

"If this is their plan, this means complete, demolishing of what we constructed in the peace talks," Mr. Arafat said. "This cannot be accepted. If they want to have manoeuvres, the manoeuvres must be far away from us."

The PLO leader made the comments during a seminar on Jerusalem at the People's Museum in Stockholm.

He then flew to Helsinki, Finland, where he was asked on arrival if the troops withdrawal negotiations had broken off.

"Not yet, we are waiting for the reply of the Israelis," he told the Associated Press. "What they have offered is

redeployment. So we are waiting for their new proposals."

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Israel and the Arabs have no choice but to stick with the peace talks, despite recent difficulties and violence.

Angry protests erupted in Gaza last week over the army's killings of two Palestinians on the most-wanted list. On Saturday, the Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas enforced a general strike for a third day in Gaza (see page 10).

Israel Television Saturday quoted officials in Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's office as saying that there was no sense of deadlock, and that the Israel-PLO talks would resume this week.

Mr. Rabin has said the Dec. 13 target date for the start of troops withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho was not sacred, and that a delay was possible. Israel and the PLO agreed on the timetable in their Sept. 13 peace accord, and the PLO has said it was important to stick to it.

Mr. Peres said Saturday: "I have no doubt that we embarked on the right path, despite the difficulties, despite the pain and despite the disappointment."

"All the other paths are filled with mines, with dangers, with uprising... we've paid enough in the past," Mr. Peres

told Israel Radio Saturday in a telephone interview from Europe.

"There is no alternative," Mr. Peres added. "The days of yesterday have passed in all the countries of the Middle East."

Finland is the third country on Mr. Arafat's five-day-Nordic tour aimed at raising money and investments for Palestinian autonomy.

Mr. Arafat had suspended the withdrawal talks previously, in Tab, Egypt, when the Israelis insisted on having manoeuvres in Jericho. The talks then reopened in Cairo.

Mr. Arafat told Swedish parliamentarians in a closed meeting that he was pessimistic about the peace process, according to an official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Mr. Arafat said he got the news of the Israeli position from Nabil Shaath, the PLO's chief negotiator at the talks.

Mr. Arafat said that Mr. Shaath flew to Stockholm late Friday night from Paris, where economic talks are going on. Mr. Arafat did not explain why Dr. Shaath would have flown from Paris with the news about the withdrawal talks, which are taking place in Cairo.

Mr. Arafat did not specify the details of the dispute, either how far away he wanted the Israelis, or where they wanted to have the manoeuvres.

Yemen party member urges federation

SANAA (R) — A member of Yemen's presidential council was quoted Saturday as saying his party was ready for a federation as an alternative to the merger which forged the former North Yemen and South Yemen into unified state.

The London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat quoted Salem Saleem Mohammad, also second in command of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), as saying his party "is prepared for federalism as a practical alternative protecting the rights of all parties and (protecting) the unity and sovereignty of Yemen."

It was the first time that a member of the country's presidential council and a YSP leader advocated this publicly. A multi-party dialogue intended to defuse Yemen's worst political crisis threatening three years of unity has been postponed until Sunday.

Former South Yemen President Ali Nasser Mohammed said on Saturday he was ending seven years of exile after Yemen's bickering leaders sought his mediation to stop the crisis turning into civil war.

Mr. Nasser Mohammed told Reuters in an interview he was returning home to help. "If this crisis remains unresolved then this could lead to a civil war," he said.

Efforts under way to free U.S. diplomat held in Yemen

SANAA (Agencies) — The U.S. embassy Saturday received a message from kidnapped American diplomat Haynes Mahoney saying he was being well-treated by his captors, tribesmen in the oil-rich desert province of Mareb.

Police sources said Mr. Mahoney also told the embassy and his family that he expected to be freed in a day or two. The sources, who spoke in exchange for anonymity, would not say how the message was conveyed. Embassy officials declined comment.

Mr. Mahoney, head of the U.S. Information Service in Yemen, was grabbed Thursday night by five gunmen who intercepted his car in Sanaa, a block away from the Taj Sheba Hotel, where he had attended a reception.

He was the first diplomat to be kidnapped in the violence-plagued country, where dozens of foreigners, mainly oilmen and tourists, have been grabbed in the past two years by

tribesmen in conflict with the government.

All the previous kidnap victims were freed unharmed. It remains unclear whether the government has ever accepted the abductor's demands, which we never officially divulged.

But sources in Sanaa have said in previous cases, the tribes demanded employment for their men and improvement of living conditions in their provinces.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement Friday that security men had located the hide-out where Mr. Mahoney was being held in the region of Gahm, 70 kilometres northeast of Sanaa, in the Mareb province.

It acknowledged the tribe holding him had made "demands of the (Sanaa) government," but did not disclose them or identify the tribe by name.

A ministry source identified the abductors' chief as Mubarak Saleh Mashan Al Zayedi, a

member of the Jihm tribe, adding that he sought "to pressure the government in a personal affair concerning bonuses and sums of money it had promised," but failed to deliver.

One diplomat said: "The Americans had hopes for his release on Friday. They still have hopes on Saturday, but barring the unexpected, these are still not big ones."

"I think prospects for his release today (Saturday) are still slim so far... one or two more days might be needed to complete discussions with the sheikh and with the government before his release," said a tribal source.

Police Saturday surrounded the region where Mr. Mahoney was reportedly held.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh sent a delegation of tribal leaders to Mareb to negotiate with the kidnappers, Western diplomats said.

"Yemeni officials have assured the (U.S.) embassy

that every effort will be made," to free Mahoney who is being held in Jihm, 70 kilometres east of the capital, they said.

Similarly, tribal leaders in Mareb have also been negotiating with the kidnappers, an Interior Ministry source said.

The ministry has "a definite plan to save the diplomat" in the event mediation efforts fail, he said giving no details.

Interior Minister Yehya Al Mutawakali travelled to Jihm Friday and was still negotiating with tribal chiefs for the release of the diplomat, whose car also was taken by the abductors.

Mr. Mahoney, who is in his 40s and speaks fluent Arabic, was alone when he was grabbed. His Syrian wife, Sossil, was at U.S. Ambassador Arthur Hinghes' residence attending a Thanksgiving dinner.

The couple have three daughters, the eldest of whom is six.

Iraq is guardedly hopeful after arms monitoring agreement

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraqis were Saturday torn between optimism and caution after Baghdad's agreement to long-term monitoring of its weapons capability sparked hopes for a quick lifting of U.N. sanctions against the country.

"This acceptance has pulled the last card from the hands of the powers that be in the (U.N.) Security Council who seek to maintain the embargo," said Saad Qassem Hamud, an official of Iraq's ruling Baath Party.

But another official who declined to be identified said, "Iraq's enemies can find other alibis to maintain the embargo."

Iraqi and U.N. officials said Friday that Baghdad had agreed to long-term monitoring of its chemical, nuclear and armament programmes, removing major obstacles in lifting a U.N. embargo on Iraqi oil sales.

In a letter to the Security Council, Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahaf agreed to the long-term arrangement but said he disagreed with U.N. complaints his country had not fully abided by its pledge to destroy its programmes to develop chemical, nuclear and biological arms and end work on a long-range missile delivery system.

Diplomatic sources said Iraq's pledge to honour its agreements with the United Nations would likely not be enough to convince the Security Council to lift the oil embargo in the near future and give Iraq's economy a badly needed boost.

Initial reaction from the United States U.N. mission, which would have a veto over any lifting of sanctions, was sceptical.

A U.S. spokeswoman said Iraq had "made and broken many promises in the past. It must now demonstrate on the ground, over a sustained period of time, its full cooperation with an effective monitoring and verification regime."

The head of the U.N. commission on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction welcomed the Iraqi move, but said the programme would have to operate for about six months to see whether it was working.

Ambassador Rolf Ekeus told a news conference the six months would not begin until some time early in 1994.

Outlining remaining obstacles, which have a direct bearing on any easing by the Security Council of sanctions on Iraqi oil exports, Mr. Ekeus said: "We need a certain time to satisfy ourselves that these plans are acceptable."

He estimated that the programme would have to be up and running for about six months.

The second hurdle, relating to Iraq's past weapons programmes, was to "verify fully that we have... identified all weapons and all production facilities and disposed of them."

Iraq had not been able to provide full evidence because it says some of the documents were destroyed during the Gulf war or through later action.

Mr. Ekeus called Baghdad's acceptance a "triumph for the council," which had held fast in maintaining the sanctions it imposed after Iraq's August

1990 invasion of Kuwait. Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz has been in New York since Sunday to plead for the lifting of sanctions.

Baghdad's black market reacted with guarded optimism. Moneychangers said the dollar which Friday traded at 150 dinars fell Saturday to 132 dinars before settling at 142 dinars.

At the official rate, the dinar fetches \$3.2. Views were mixed on Baghdad's streets.

"It's an important step but (U.S. President Bill) Clinton will raise 1,000 obstacles to bar the lifting of the embargo," said cab driver Mahmoud Abbas.

"It's a day to celebrate, we've suffered enough," shouted a housewife in a Baghdad market.

Iraqis learned of the formal acceptance of Resolution 715 from foreign radio broadcasts. The Iraqi press did not report it, as the decision was announced after the publications' deadlines.

Iraq had opposed such monitoring because of fears its weapons development programmes would never be free of Western eyes.

Mr. Shahaf voiced hope the security council would answer the Iraqi initiative by the immediate implementation of paragraph 22 of U.N. Resolution 687, which calls for the embargo to be lifted once it was determined Iraq had lived up to its agreement to destroy all weapons of mass destruction.

Philipinos living in Jordan, please see page 5

Qadhafi maintains defiance at West over Lockerbie bombing

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi Friday again vowed defiance at the West, hailing never to bow to international pressure to hand over two Lockerbie bombing suspects for trial in Britain or the United States.

"We say no, a thousand times no, and are ready to confront the cowards for decades to come," Qadhafi declared just five days before United Nations sanctions on Tripoli are due to be tightened.

The Security Council on Nov. 11 ordered a freeze on Libyan assets abroad and an embargo on deliveries of oil-related equipment, effective Dec. 1.

The new measures complement a freeze on air traffic and arms sales imposed on Tripoli in April 1992 as part of U.N. efforts to force Libya to hand over two men indicted in the United States and Britain over the destruction of a U.S. airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland.

The December 1988 explosion killed 270 people.

"The West is fooling itself if it thinks that threats to cut off oil sales, freeze assets and impose a blockade will weaken the Libyan people," Col. Qadhafi told a gathering in eastern Tripoli.

"The morale and the courage of the Libyan people will disrupt all calculations, foil and plots and defeat the enemy," he said. He was confident of "the triumph of the Arab Nation and the Libyan people, who have resisted (outside pressures) for 3,000 years, while a nation of mercenaries, immigrants and outlaws like the United States has no future and is destined for civil strife."

Col. Qadhafi on Wednesday ruled out handing over the two suspects wanted in the West, as hundreds of thousands of Libyans demonstrated against the U.N. embargo.

"We are ready to discuss the Lockerbie affair and other matters, but not the country's

sovereignty, its laws, and the duty of the state to protect its nationals," Col. Qadhafi told the crowd in Tripoli, according to the official news agency JANA.

The agency said a crowd of nearly two million greeted Col. Qadhafi and pledged not to bow to U.N. pressure for the surrender of the two suspects.

Lockerbie film

The Lomro conglomerate and the Libyan government have agreed to finance a documentary film about the bombing, the Financial Times reported Saturday.

The £633,000 (\$949,500) film is being made by Allan Franco, a U.S. producer who has made a number of highly praised documentaries about the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The project is being funded by Metropole Hotels, which is two-thirds owned by Lomro and one third by the Libyan Arab Finance Company — the main investment vehicle of Libya.

The paper said the deal had prompted further division between Dieter Bock and his joint Lomro chief executive, Tiny Rowland, who is responsible for Lomro's involvement in the film.

Mr. Bock is known to be embarrassed by the Libyan connection and wants to minimise business dealings with Tripoli.

But Mr. Rowland, who is currently abroad and unavailable for comment, has accumulated what he believes to be evidence that Libya was not responsible for the bombing and has passed the information to British ministers.

A Foreign Office spokesman said Friday the office was not aware of any evidence relating to the bombing having been passed to ministers by Mr. Rowland.

Mr. Franco told the paper he had complete control of the project and could withdraw

if there were any interference from Lomro or the Libyans. He said he had already uncovered some "incredible" details about the background to the bombing, adding that shooting would start in "three or four weeks."

He said he had requested interviews with the two Libyan suspects, Abdul Basset Ali Al Megrahi and Lamien Khalifa Fhimah.

Jim Swire, a spokesman for the families of Lockerbie victims, whose own daughter died in the blast, said he supported Mr. Franco's plan in making the documentary film.

"I believe that he is in search of the truth, nothing more, nothing less, and I trust him to try to find that," Mr. Swire said on BBC Television news.

'Witness is mad'

A Libyan defector who told U.S. interrogators that Libyan agents bombed Pan Am 103 is crazy and should be killed, relatives said on national television.

Abdul Mejid Jaaka's family members spoke from the podium at the Tripoli rally called Friday.

The official Libyan news agency JANA said the television audience and a million people at the Tripoli rally saw Mr. Jaaka's father show medical reports he said proved his son was insane.

And they heard "Jaaka's uncle describe his nephew as 'a traitor whose killing is allowed, whose physical liquidation is a legitimate right and a holy duty.'"

Egypt's Middle East News Agency reported from Tripoli that some speakers at the rally threatened to destroy the houses of "Jaaka's family if they did not denounce their relative. JANA's report of the Jaaka family's speeches did not mention the threats against their houses."

Mr. Jaaka, 32, was an employee at the Libyan Airlines,



SOMALI FLOODS: A Somali child carries a younger child on his back as he pulls a box through a flooded street near a makeshift refugee camp in central Mogadishu Saturday after heavy rains lashed the Somali capital over the past few days (AFP photo)

Cyprus gives mixed reply to U.N.

NICOSIA (R) — Cyprus has given a mixed reception to U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali's latest report on the divided island in which he chides both the rival Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities for a lack of progress.

A government spokesman said on Friday President Glafcos Clerides will send a letter to Dr. Ghali saying it was the Turkish negotiator who walked out from the U.N.-sponsored peace talks last June, a government spokesman said.

"It was Rauf Denktaş, the Turkish Cypriot negotiator, who refused discussion on the three (U.N.) confidence building proposals and then refused to return to the negotiating table to resume the talks," Yiannakis Casoulides said.

In a written report to the Security Council, the secretary general said that neither the Greek nor the Turkish side have shown a serious willingness to compromise.

He also said he planned to resume intensive contacts aimed at building confidence between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities after elections in breakaway northern Cyprus scheduled for Dec. 12.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 following a Turkish invasion sparked by an abortive coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece.

Turkish Cypriots in 1983 declared an independent state in the northern part. It is only recognised by Turkey which maintains over 30,000 troops there.

The U.N.-brokered peace talks aim at reuniting the island under a bi-zonal, bi-communal federal system.

Afghan premier offers to resign with president

CHARASYAB, Afghanistan (R) — Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said Saturday he was ready to resign if his arch-foe President Burhanuddin Rabbani also stepped down because of their failure to bring peace.

"I am ready to resign but... President Rabbani should do the same," Mr. Hekmatyar said when asked about the failure of his government to end bloody faction fighting in and around Kabul.

He said the two leaders should step down together to pave the way for national elections in war-shattered Afghanistan.

In the latest clashes, more than 200 people have been killed or injured in battles this month between Mr. Hekmatyar's radical Hezb-e-Islami fighters and forces loyal to Mr. Rabbani for control of the strategic Tagab valley, 60 kilometres northeast of the capital.

Mr. Hekmatyar, speaking at his heavily fortified base on the southeastern outskirts of Kabul, blamed Mr. Rabbani's 'Jamiat-e-Islami' forces for 'starting the fighting in Tagab' but said he was willing to accept a conditional ceasefire.

"I am ready to accept a ceasefire at any time if the government will accept," he said. Mr. Hekmatyar has not entered Kabul since his appointment last July because of security concerns.

Jamiat-e-Islami jets carried out bombing raids on the Naghlu Dam at the southern end of the valley that provides much of Kabul's electricity Friday but fighting had died down Saturday, Mr. Hekmatyar said.

He denied his forces had seized Jamiat-e-Islami positions in the fighting, saying Hezb-e-Islami had always occupied the valley but said he would withdraw his men if Jamiat-e-Islami also pulled out.



Gulbuddin Hekmatyar

and handed the valley over to local men.

However, Jamiat-e-Islami spokesman Abdullah disputed his claims, saying Hezb-e-Islami fighters launched the attack on Nov. 1 and Jamiat-e-Islami jets were responding, with raids targeting only military installations.

"Hekmatyar is issuing misleading statements," Dr. Abdullah said, adding that Jamiat-e-Islami fighters would not pull out of the valley until it had been fully secured from Hezb attacks.

Witnesses say Hezb-e-Islami forces have made substantial advances since they began their push northward up the valley, although Jamiat-e-Islami guerrillas led by the powerful ex-Defence Minister and veteran commander of the 14-year Afghan civil war, Ahmad Shah Masoud, have recaptured some of their former positions.

Mr. Hekmatyar demanded that troops of all parties in the fractious coalition Islamic government leave Kabul if peace was to be restored to the city, which has been a battleground for the rival parties since they took power from the former communist government last April.

Sahara referendum delayed until mid-1994

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary-General Boutros Ghali abandoned hope Friday of organising a referendum on the future of Western Sahara by the end of this year but said he hoped a vote might be possible in mid-1994.

In a written report to the Security Council concerning differences over who should be allowed to vote, he noted the council asked him last March to report on prospects for holding the long-delayed referendum by the end of 1993 at the latest.

"In view of the remaining difficulties explained in this report, it is obviously not possible to meet this expectation," he said.

"On the assumption that these remaining difficulties are settled and that progress is

made in the initial stages of the registration process, I hope to be able to submit a report to the council early next year... with a view to holding the referendum in mid-1994," Dr. Ghali added.

Under a 1991 plan endorsed by the Security Council, a vote was to have been held in January 1992 to decide whether the former Spanish colony should be incorporated into Morocco, which controls most of the territory, or become independent, as demanded by the Polisario Front, whose followers have fought a 16-year civil war. Polisario has accused Morocco of trying to pack the electoral rolls with its supporters.

Dr. Ghali said any estimated date for the referendum at this stage "bears little meaning un-

less both parties demonstrate a spirit of cooperation and forbearance without which the implementation of the settlement plan would continue to evade us."

He intended meanwhile to maintain the existing strength of a U.N. force sent to Western Sahara in September 1991 but so far only partially deployed.

Known as the U.N. Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), it comprises 226 military observers and 98 support personnel, plus 26 civil police. It is commanded by Brigadier-General Andre van Baelen of Belgium. MINURSO's authorised strength is about 1,600 military observers, 300 police and up to 1,000 civilian personnel.

UAE plans drive against AIDS, uses mosques to broadcast advice

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is launching a campaign against AIDS, using mosque loudspeakers to broadcast advice and displaying posters of international celebrities who died of the disease.

The campaign, which kicks off next week and will mark World AIDS Day Wednesday, is the most open so far in the conservative Gulf region where there is little, if any public discussion of acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

A programme announced by the Health Ministry on Thursday includes seminars, dis-

tribution of booklets, lectures in schools and universities, sermons at open-air Friday prayers and the display of portraits of celebrities.

Volunteers will go to restaurants, parks, shops and other places to hand out leaflets giving explanations about AIDS while balloons will be released, carrying the slogan of the campaign "AIDS requires urgent action."

"Centres will be set up in parks showing films on this disease and world stars who are suffering from AIDS and those who have died from it," a health ministry official said.

"Portraits of them will also

be hanged in public places. We are targeting all sorts of people."

The UAE is among few Arab countries to allow open debate about AIDS as most regional states associate it with sex, the discussion of which is taboo in Islam. Several regional states have also been reluctant to inform the World Health Organisation on their AIDS cases.

Such countries as Saudi Arabia and Iran, the strictest societies in the region, say they are almost immune to AIDS given their Islamic teachings which prohibit illicit relationships and drugs, another

cause of AIDS.

A nationwide screening drive in the UAE has shown that more than 1,200 people have tested positive for the AIDS virus since it was launched in 1985. Officials said most of them were foreigners, who were deported.

But health ministry sources said several UAE nationals had tested positive for the AIDS virus upon return from holidays in Thailand and other countries, most of them contracted it through sexual intercourse, they said.

The commander of Dubai police, Brigadier Dahi Khalifa, called this month for stric-

ter immigration laws, saying the influx of women from Asia, East Europe and Russia had turned the emirate into a "den of vice and AIDS."

"The sermon during next Friday's prayer will be devoted to AIDS. Preachers have been instructed to speak about the disease and radio and television stations will broadcast them live," an official from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Endowments said.

"Of course they are not going to explain the disease. They are not doctors. They will deal with its religious and ethical aspects. They will tell people that Islam can protect

them from AIDS and that it symbolises God's wrath against drug and sexual abusers."

The AIDS campaign comes a few days ahead of another drive against drugs. Thousands of people and policemen will form a caravan on Dec. 6 to tour the UAE's seven emirates for two weeks to warn the public against narcotics through seminars, booklets, films and religious programmes.

It follows a surge in narcotic offences in the UAE, where around four tonnes of heroin, cocaine, hashish and other drugs were seized in 1991.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Feature Film: "L'Impure" (part 2)

18:00 News in French

18:15 Fenetre Sur

18:30 News in Hebrew

18:45 News in Arabic

19:00 You Bet Your Life

21:10 Thirty something

22:00 News in English

22:30 The Men Who Killed Kennedy

23:10 The Golden Palace

PRAYER TIMES

06:49 Fajr

06:10 Sunrise (Summe) Duba

11:23 Dhuhur

14:12 Asr

16:36 Maghreb

17:57 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetish, Tel. 810740

Assumption of God Church, Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terraviva Church Tel. 622666

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 623543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771337

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Assumption International Church Tel. 625256

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 661495

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Clouds will appear at different altitudes, temperatures will slightly rise, and winds will be easterly moderate in Amman, partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 5/17

Amman 12/25

Deserts 4/19

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

Jordan Valley 10/24

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 15, Aqaba 24. Humidity readings: Amman 65 per cent, Aqaba 44 per cent

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Ahmad Othman 786384

Dr. Adnan Al Zaghoul 898140

Dr. Ghaleb Zayadeh 738011

Dr. Youssef Abdo 694916

First pharmacy 661912

Ferdous pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Natrouk pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeissan pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID: Dr. Mohammad Al Khalili 377757

Alquds pharmacy (-)

ZARQA: Dr. Issa Al Omari 901266

Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Emergency 630341

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 89229

Blood Bank 75121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 658800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 878111

Telephone Information 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813813/352

Khalil Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6

Akileh Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amn 636140

Palestine, Shmeissan 664171/4

Shmeissan Hospital 669131

University Hospital 843645

Al-Musfer Hospital 6672779

The Islamic, Abdali 666177/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646

Italian, Al-Mubareen 77101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Asirafah 75111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)883323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)999090

IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775

Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100

AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information depart-

ment at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

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Draft dodgers to be pardoned

Death sentences to be commuted

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Two hundred Jordanians serving sentences for dodging the draft are expected to be pardoned by His Majesty King Hussein, who will also commute the death sentences passed on 15 other prisoners, informed sources said Saturday.

The sources also said 250 Jordanians held without trial are also expected to be released under an order to be issued by the Ministry of Interior acting upon directives issued by the King.

Royal Amnesties are necessary only for pardoning those who have already been convicted.

The concerned governors could order the release of those held without trial.

The 200 expected to be pardoned by the King were jailed for their failure to enlist for the compulsory military service. The batch of 200 is believed to be the last group of prisoners under this category after the government relaxed its compulsory enlistment regulations, the sources said.

For nearly two years, the Armed Forces has not been strictly enforcing the compulsory service and very few conscripts have been enlisted during this period.

In 1989, the government introduced a bill under which expatriates and their sons could receive exemption from the service in lieu for a payment of \$6,000 to the treasury. The arrangement was gradually expanded to include Jordanians resident in the country.

According to the sources, Royal Decrees are expected to be issued soon ordering the release of the 200 as well as commuting the sentences on 15 on death row, most of them convicted of brutal crimes involving murder. No further details were immediately available.

Amnesty International, the

London-based international human rights watchdog, issued an appeal last week raising concern over what it described as the rising number of executions in Jordan after several years of relative abstention and focusing attention on 15 whom it feared may be at "imminent risk of execution."

Human rights activists say that while Jordan's record of respect for human rights is by far one of the best in the Middle East as well as the Arab World, the fact that 12 people were executed — most of them convicted of brutal murders — in the Kingdom this year was alarming to Amnesty.

In its statement last week, Amnesty said the number of executions in Jordan this year was the "highest number recorded by Amnesty International in over two decades."

"The organisation is profoundly saddened by this rising trend, particularly since no executions took place in 1992 after King Hussein had repeatedly intervened to commute death sentences."

Three Jordanians were executed in Jordan this month, including a woman who was found guilty of premeditated murder of her husband.

Rights groups admit that executions are carried out in Jordan only in cases of first degree murder convictions involving rape and cruelty and aimed at gaining material benefits.

But they emphasise that as a principle no country should have a death penalty.

Amnesty said last week that in principle it "does not condone crimes of violence such as murder, and recognises the responsibility of governments to bring the perpetrators to justice," but it opposes the death penalty in all cases "as a violation of the right to life and of the right to be subjected to cruel, inhuman degrading punishment as specified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Specialists to review public administration trends

AMMAN (Petra) — The first Jordanian conference on public administration will open at Amman University in Irbid Tuesday under the patronage of Chief of the Royal Court Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker. A statement from Yarmouk University quoted Rifaa Sour, assistant dean of the faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, as saying that specialists from various universities will take part in the three-day conference which will review several research papers concerning administration issues in Jordan.

Dr. Faouzi said that the conference aims primarily to allow specialists to debate new trends in public administration with particular focus on manpower development and skills, especially in the new atmosphere of democracy in the Kingdom.

He said questions related to public financing of projects under the present economic situation and the role of the inspection and control departments over the public administrative work will also be tackled during the meeting.

Awqaf Ministry prepares for pilgrims

AMMAN (Petra) — At least 1,500 Muslims from Palestinian lands occupied since 1948 wishing to perform the lesser pilgrimage to Mecca are due to cross into Jordan via the King Hussein Bridge on Tuesday. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs announced Saturday that it had arranged for their crossing and their travel to Saudi Arabia in cooperation with the other concerned government authorities. It said that the pilgrims would be housed at the pilgrims camps at Ghor Nimrein in the Jordan Valley on their way to Mecca and back to their homeland. The ministry said that it also made administrative arrangements which include sending a special mission to accompany the pilgrims to Mecca, secure housing for them there and in Medina and guide them to the holy sites.

WHAT'S GOING ON EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by artist Farhadi Abdel Hafiez at the Balika' Art Gallery in Al Fuheis (10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 729092).
- ★ Exhibition of ceramics by Iraqi artist Saham Soudi at Alia Art Gallery (9:00-13:30 and 15:00-18:00) (Tel. 639303).
- ★ Photographic exhibition on the intifada at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.).
- ★ Exhibition of pottery by Hazim Al Zu'bi at the Jordan Crafts Centre (Al Aydi) — Jabal Amman, Second Circle (9:00-13:00 and 15:00-18:00).
- ★ Exhibition of lithographs by a number of artists at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Hammoud Shantout at Baladna Art Gallery (Gardens Street).
- ★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artist Rakan Dahdoub at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).
- ★ Art exhibition by a number of artists at the Student Affairs Deanship Building at the University of Jordan.
- ★ Exhibition of recent paintings by artist Ammar Khammash at Darat Al Founon of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh. Also showing the permanent exhibition (Saturday-Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.).

FILMS & DRAMAS

- ★ Film entitled "The Omega Man" at the American Center at 5:00 p.m. (98 minutes).
- ★ Drama in Arabic entitled "The Question" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 5:00 p.m.
- ★ Drama in Arabic entitled "The Happiness of Married Life" at Saoud Al Rifai Auditorium at the University of Jordan at 3:30 p.m.

SEMINARS

- ★ Seminar entitled "Child's Right" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.

DIALOGUE

- ★ Dialogue with poet Abdul Wahab Al Bayati at Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture at 7:00 p.m.

Chile is ready to offer its expertise to Jordan in mining, agriculture — visiting official

AMMAN (Petra) — The government, economic and trade institutions of Chile want to bolster ties with countries in the Middle East, particularly Jordan, because the Kingdom enjoys a very important central location enabling it to play a leading role, according to Alex Meneses, head of a visiting Chilean trade delegation.

Speaking at a meeting with Minister of Industry and Trade Bassam Al Saket, Mr. Meneses, who is the director of the international economic affairs at Chile's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said Chile is prepared to offer Jordan its expertise in mining and agriculture.

He extended to the minister an invitation to visit Chile and examine the work of Chilean trade and industrial institutions. Dr. Saket said that Jordan was approaching a new stage of economic and political developments which means facing new economic trends requiring more activities in construction, housing and de-

velopment, especially in the occupied Arab lands of Palestine.

Jordan, he said, was capable of offering its expertise and serving as a bridge in contributing to the reconstruction and development programme in the Palestinian lands.

Noting that Jordan was also keen on bolstering trade links with Chile, Dr. Saket said it was important for Jordanian importers and exporters to be acquainted with Chilean products and for Chilean businesspersons and importers to learn about Jordan's industrial commodities.

Ministry of Industry and Trade sources said that Jordan has been importing Chilean sodium nitrates and seeds since 1981 when the two countries signed a trade and economic agreement.

Chile imports machinery, electric appliances and transportation equipment, and sells copper, vegetables, fruits and paper.

Chile, said the ministry, imported nothing from Jordan in

1992, but it sold the Kingdom JD 148.5 thousand worth of Chilean goods.

Mr. Meneses also held talks Saturday with Khaldoun Ahn Hassan, chairman of the Amman Chamber of Industry, and discussed promoting Jordanian-Chilean trade links. Following the meeting, Mr. Ahn Hassan said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the talks focused on the prospect of developing relations and the exchange of expertise in industry. According to Mr. Ahn Hassan, the two sides discussed copper mining and explored the possibility of establishing a regional centre in Amman for marketing Chilean industries in view of the importance of Jordan's central geographical location and its proximity to Europe and Africa. Mr. Ahn Hassan added that they also discussed prospects for investments in joint projects. Following the meeting, Mr. Meneses was accompanied on a tour of the National Jordanian Industrial Fair.



Minister of Industry and Trade Bassam Al Saket (centre) reviews trade ties with visiting Chilean economic official Alex Meneses (third from right) (Petra photo)

Seminar to identify pre-schoolers' problems

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Institute for Child Health and Development of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHIF) will Sunday hold a seminar on identifying and treating common problems among pre-school children.

Twenty-three physicians from the Ministry of Health, the Royal Medical Services, the General Federations of Charitable Societies and the Jordanian Society for Palestinian Medical Aid will participate in the seminar, which aims at spreading information and expertise on how to identify and treat common problems among children.

The two-day seminar will also discuss several topics, including problems in nutrition, the respiratory and nervous

systems as well as behavioural problems.

Twenty-five physicians took part in a similar seminar organised by the institute in June.

The institute was established in 1986 to raise child health care standards by improving diagnostic and treatment practices and by training child health personnel from different parts of the Kingdom.

It conducts primary field research among children and produces informational materials to increase parent and teacher awareness of early signs of childhood diseases and abnormalities.

A total of 5,384 mothers and children have benefited from the institute, which includes a Maternal and Child Health Clinic.

Deputy warns press against slander

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Toujan Faisal, Jordan's first elected woman in the Parliament expressed disappointment with some of the Jordanian press saying that some journalists were bent on tarnishing her image as a woman deputy, and she would tolerate no further such slanderous conduct on their part.

Addressing reporters at a press conference Saturday, Ms. Faisal said that she will take legal action in the future against any reporter or newspaper that attempts to damage her image or reputation in the Parliament.

Ms. Faisal, who is a newspaper columnist herself, reminded her fellow journalists

that she wants to be regarded as a Parliament member not as a woman.

Since her election to Parliament on Nov. 8, said Ms. Faisal, some newspapers attacked her either directly, misquoted her or fabricated statements on her behalf and depicted her presence in Parliament in defamatory caricatures.

"Such drawings and comments harmed my image, the legislature's image and the country's image as well," said Ms. Faisal.

She praised the media's role and said it is more important than the role of Parliament.

But she reminded the journalists that the law was on her side, and she will sue any reporter who attempts to



Toujan Faisal

slander her.

"I hope this would be the last time I will see drawings or articles that do not reflect my ideas or thoughts, or something I did not say," she said.

The deputy said the reason she has yet not taken any action against reporters was because she felt her priorities were in the public's interest rather than her personal interests. Ms. Faisal maintained that while she opposes legislative interference in freedom of the press, she would support legislation imposing professional ethics on journalists, "if (she) had to."

She added that deputies are not movie stars, and the press should carry their news with objectivity and respect and avoid tabloid-style reporting and sensationalism.

"It is time for the Jordanian media to decide if it wants to be a credible and professional industry, or if it wants to be a tabloid media," she said.

Ministry starts 3-week drive against smoking in public areas

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Health Ministry Saturday announced the start of a three-week intensive campaign to combat smoking in public places, noting that the 1977 law imposing fines and other punitive measures against smoking in these areas was to be applied.

A ministry official told the Jordan Times that the major aim of this campaign is to spread public awareness against the dangers of smoking, adding that health officials would not hesitate in taking measures to ensure respect of the law.

Three teams of officials are appointed to carry out the campaign in the Amman region, but their colleagues will

be carrying on similar duties in all governorates, said the official. The campaign was seen as part of a Health Ministry plan announced last July to impose tough measures against smoking in public places.

The ministry said in July that it had issued a strong advisory calling for sweeping measures in this regard and calling for a total ban on smoking at all government offices and public sector institutions including waiting areas for visitors and corridors as well as indoor auditoriums and sports facilities.

The ministry statement Saturday said that the three-

week campaign, which will be observed under the slogan "Towards Creating Smoke-Free Places," will include inspection of hospitals, indoor sports facilities, conference halls and health centres, as well as professional union premises, restaurants, movie-houses, public transport buses, and service taxi cars to ensure that the law is being observed.

Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas said in a statement to the Jordan Times upon the issuance of the ministry regulations last summer that international studies have proved beyond doubt that passive smoking was a major health hazard.

Ajloun court to start proceedings

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers has decided that a Court of First Instance which was recently established in Ajloun will start proceedings on Dec. 2.

The announcement was made Saturday by Justice Minister Rafeh Al Wazani who said that residents of the Ajloun area will no longer need to appear at Irbid courts to settle their cases.

Noting that the government had issued an order last April for the opening of the Ajloun court, the minister said the new court would deal with various cases except those handled by the Criminal Court in Amman.

The Ministry of Justice, said Mr. Wazani, has started implementing a plan for opening new courts in Amman and other districts and governorates.

Referring to courts to be opened soon in Amman, he said that one will be opened next week in the southern district. It will be located at the Middle East Circle on the road to the Jordan Radio and Television station.

According to Mr. Wazani, the ministry will also open a court in the eastern part of Amman, to be located on Marka Street.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince meets supporters of housing for poor

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday met at the Royal Court with Egyptian legal expert Ibrahim Fawzi and Dean of the Fine Arts College at Cairo University Sami Abdul Aziz to discuss prospects of establishing an international society to house the poor. The society will carry the name of the renowned architect Hassan Fathi.

Cabinet appoints new CSC secretary general

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Saturday appointed Mohammad Shawabkeh as secretary general of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) succeeding Khaled Radaideh who has retired. Mr. Shawabkeh had served in the foreign service before his appointment to the new post. The Cabinet also Saturday decided to appoint nine graduates of law schools as employees at the Ministry of Justice. A cabinet statement said that the group who had graduated with excellent grades would later enrol at the

Judicial Institute to prepare them to become court judges.

Egg prices drop by 150 fils per tray

AMMAN (Petra) — A committee in charge of setting prices of table eggs announced Saturday that a 30-egg tray price will be reduced by 150 fils. The order, which is to take immediate effect, was taken by the committee which groups representatives of the ministries of Supply and Agriculture and the private sector.

Jordan to attend water conference in U.S.

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is to take part in an international conference on water which is due to open in San Francisco, California, on Tuesday. Saqer Salem, a water expert at the Ministry of Water and Irrigation who will represent Jordan at the conference, said that he planned to submit a working paper containing a proposal for the amendment of a set of specifications endorsed by the World Health Organisation (WHO)



SIGNING A \$24M EUROPEAN GRANT: Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz (centre) and Thomas O'Ryan, director of the Operations Department at the European Investment Bank (EIB) Saturday sign an agreement by which the EIB is to give Jordan a \$24 million grant to help finance telecommunications projects linking Jordan with neighbouring Arab countries and

Europe. The grant will also finance part of the ongoing projects for improving telephone networks within the Amman region which will be implemented by the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) between 1994 and 1997. The European grant covers about 50 per cent of the total cost of the projects; the Jordanian government will supply the balance (Petra photo)

Arab environmental ministers meeting ends with protection plans, projects

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan took part in the fifth meeting of the Arab Council of Ministers responsible for environmental affairs held in Cairo between Nov. 23 and 25, according to Saleh Al Share', director of the Environment Department who led the Jordanian team to the meeting.

The council discussed a joint programme for the Arab World dealing with the environment in the coming two years and the mechanism for its implementation, said Dr. Share' upon his return to Amman Saturday.

He said the council decided

to call a group of Arab experts to prepare a comprehensive report on plans to protect the environment in 21st century as endorsed by the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro last year.

The council also formed an Arab experts group to study the implementation of an international plan to deal with changes in climatic conditions and another to review efforts in combatting desertification, said Dr. Share'.

In addition, he said, the Arab ministers meeting decided to set up committees aimed at implementing programmes to combat industrial

pollution in the Arab World and to spread awareness among the Arab public on way to protect the environment.

In the course of spreading awareness in this regard, he said the council decided to publish booklets on the environment to be distributed to Arab children in cooperation with the U.N. Development Programme and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF).

The Cairo meeting, according to Dr. Share', endorsed an agreement on inter-Arab exchanges of information about vessels that cause marine pollution.

BBC to hold phone-in programme on freedom of the press Thursday

AMMAN (J.T.) — What are the limits for the freedom of the press? Should a publication always take into account the national interest? Does the national interest necessarily represent the government's interest? Do newspapers have the right to pry into the private lives of public figures? Is there complete freedom of the press in the West?

These are just some of the questions that the BBC Arabic Service is inviting its listeners

to pose to a distinguished panel of journalists in a phone-in programme on Thursday, Dec. 2, according to a BBC press release.

Taking part will be Othman Al Omeir, editor of Al Sharq Al Awsat. Atif Al Ghamri, chief of Al Ahran Bureau in London, and Rana Qabbani, a prominent Arab journalist and broadcaster living in London.

"Over the past year we have received many letters from listeners commenting on what

the press publish, particularly the British press," said Hani Larabi, editor of Features and Music on BBC Arabic Service.

The lines for calls to BBC Arabic Service phone-in on freedom of the press will be open from 1100 GMT on Thursday, Dec. 2. The programme will be broadcast from 1415-1600 GMT.

The telephone number is 44-71-379-7444. Listeners are invited to call with their name and number.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

الصحف الأردنية المستقلة المنشورة بالإنجليزية من قبل المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

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Israel's discriminatory democracy!

ABDUL WAHAB DARAWSHE is right to demand an Arab ministerial post as a condition for his party's support for the Labour government. The Israeli Arabs have been so far denied a share in Israeli cabinet on the premise that it is too sensitive for Israeli security to have Arabs sit in Israel's highest decision-making body. After 40 years of the creation of Israel in Palestine, the Jewish state has yet to allow an Arab to hold any cabinet portfolio even though Arabs number more than 700,000 of the population. At the moment, the two parties that represent Arabs in the Knesset hold five seats and though not within the Labour-led coalition have continuously given their support to the Rabin government. It is high time that the Arab minority enjoyed equality in Israel, and attained their political rights.

Mr. Darawshe, who leads the Arab Democratic Party, however, appears to make this principled cause a personal crusade by insisting that he himself be named the first Israeli-Arab minister. Darawshe's legitimate cause would have won him more acclaim and credibility had he championed the principle rather than the person in this context.

Although Mr. Darawshe appears to be pressing the government for a cabinet seat when it seems to be vulnerable and weak on the peace issue, it might still be the most opportune time for the Arabs to make their claim for a place in the Rabin coalition government more persuasive. Mr. Rabin may not feel obliged to include an Arab in his cabinet because he thinks the Arab members of the Knesset won't fail him on the peace issue. Yet it is exactly for this reason that Rabin should incorporate an Arab in his cabinet to ensure the Arab's continued support and strengthen his coalition of 56 Knesset members that include in addition to Labour, the ultra-orthodox Shas Party on the right and Meretz on the left. The contention by some Israeli power circles that Darawshe, a close friend of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, should not be let in on Israel state secrets can only be described as extremely discriminatory.

The quest for Arab representation in the Israeli establishment must never be at the price of suffocating or aborting the peace process. Darawshe and his colleagues must press ahead with their dreams and yearnings but with discretion and prudence. Israel has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) only a year ago but without any fanfare. The Israeli Arabs can invoke the ICCPR not only for acquiring cabinet posts but to rectify their overall situation as well.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING on the upcoming visit to the Middle East by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Al Ra'i daily said Saturday that the trip is clearly aimed at giving momentum to the peace process. It is rather difficult to imagine the kind of stimulus which will come from Mr. Christopher to the peace process following several visits to the region by high level U.S. officials, but we can rightly and safely say that not just and durable settlement can come about except through more serious American efforts and pressures on the Zionists to comply with the requirements of peace and the international legitimacy and U.N. resolutions, says the paper. It said that we have seen the world community taking quick decisions, and the U.S. exercising speedy political, economic and military pressures in dealing with the Gulf crisis, and we have seen the world community and the U.S. torturing hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis, including children and the sick, for the sake of implementing U.N. resolutions. Each time an American official or secretary of state visits this region, we hear statements about the need for the Arabs to offer more concessions and to refrain from rejecting American and Israeli terms for peace, continued the daily. It said that any peace that does not give back to the Palestinians their legitimate rights would be a fragile peace imposed on the Arabs by the U.S.-Israeli arrogant alliance.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour daily strongly criticised U.S. President Bill Clinton for receiving in his office the writer Salman Rushdie who wrote the widely-controversial book "Satanic Verses." By so doing, the U.S. president has insulted at the feelings of the millions of Muslims, said Saleh Qallah. The writer said that by welcoming Rushdie, Mr. Clinton has explicitly shown his open hatred to the Muslims. When the late Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini ruled that Rushdie should be killed for his book, there emerged cautious voices warning that such a move could make Rushdie more famous and could make of the Indian-born British author, a symbol for western propaganda against the Islamic World under the pretext of defending freedom and democracy, said the writer. Rushdie should have been left alone or the Arab and Muslim writers could have replied to his writings, added the writer.



Wins in hand, Clinton looks to polish image

By John King
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With fresh achievements in hand, the White House has an opportunity in the next few weeks to polish President Clinton's wavering image and generate momentum for major 1994 initiatives.

As a first year of fits and starts winds down, Mr. Clinton loyalists have been most frustrated by the president's rocky public reviews despite solid economic news and a substantial list of policy accomplishments.

So the administration hopes Mr. Clinton's come-from-behind North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) victory, favourable reviews from the weekend Pacific trade conference and a late-year focus on violence and crime will combine to boost his standing significantly — in Washington and beyond.

"The biggest plus, the political plus here, is that people will use this period as a lens on the entire year," said James Carville, a Clinton political adviser. "The president's image has been blurred a lot, sometimes because of our own mistakes. But when you look into that lens you can't help but say, 'damn, the guy got a lot done.'"

Without day-to-day legislative wars after Congress recesses this week, Mr. Clinton plans to make the case that his first year in office was as productive as any president in modern times. He will also lay the groundwork for health care, welfare reform and anti-crime initiatives on his early 1994 agenda.

Not that Mr. Clinton's voice will go unchallenged, or that he will be free of political headaches.

His NAFTA victory created deep rifts in his own Democratic Party, and organised labour is proving slow to accept Mr. Clinton's peace offer. Liberals are encouraged by Mr. Clinton's decision to spend more time outlining

what Adviser George Stephanopoulos calls "the moral authority of the office" in urging families and communities to fight crime, violence and other social ills. But many want more spending, too.

And then there's Ross Perot.

Mr. Perot lost the NAFTA war but promised to carry on, with health care his next target. Mr. Perot argued that Mr. Clinton opened the treasury to pass NAFTA, that the trade deal reduces American competitiveness, and that an employer mandate as part of health care reform "will force even more jobs to Mexico."

"They may see this as a win but the American people don't," Mr. Perot said.

The White House view is that Mr. Perot lost credibility in the NAFTA debate. But advisers acknowledge Mr. Clinton needs to repair relations with blue-collar Americans, and say health care reform is the perfect prescription.

"We need a democratic working-class base and there is a lot of anger out there," said White House pollster Stanley Greenberg. "We have to reassure these people we're for them. But NAFTA is trivial, compared to health care with the working class."

Overall, Mr. Greenberg said Mr. Clinton's poll standing has hovered near historic lows because the public is sceptical he can deliver on his promises. "They like his ideas and share his goals but aren't convinced he is up to accomplishing them," Mr. Greenberg said.

And despite a year of low inflation, low interest rates and improving growth, the public remains sceptical about the economy, among the biggest factors in a president's standing.

A recent national survey by a Republican firm, Public Opinion Strategies, for example, found 62 per cent of Americans believe the country is headed in the wrong direction. Just 50 per cent said Mr. Clinton was a strong leader.

Zhirinovskiy poised to win in December

By Carole Landry
Agence France Presse

MOSCOW — Ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, whose Liberal-Democratic Party is poised to win seats in the new Russian parliament, represents a "third force" on the December ballot, battling to revive great Russia.

The 47-year-old lawyer, who has forged ties with neo-fascist groups in Germany and African resistance groups throughout Europe, is relying on popular discontent to produce votes in his favour in the legislative election.

"You've seen what the democrats have done in the past two years and your grandmother can tell you all about the communists," Mr. Zhirinovskiy told voters Saturday from a podium set up in a rundown section of Moscow.

"Now, listen to me and you will know that there is a third force that knows the way," he shouted as a crowd of about 50 people quickly swelled to reach more than 200.

An effective speaker, Mr. Zhirinovskiy came to prominence as the third runner-up in the 1991 presidential election, surprisingly gathering eight per cent of the vote.

With the elimination from the race of the Russian People's Union headed by Hardliner Sergei Bahurin, Mr. Zhirinovskiy's party has been granted a clear advantage in up-jumping to the nationalist

from at least five per cent of voters, the minimum share of votes required to obtain a seat in the state Duma, the Lower House of the Federal Assembly.

Mr. Zhirinovskiy aides claim that the 156 candidates on the nationalist ticket will win at least 20 per cent of the vote from a broad constituency of discontented voters.

These include the elderly suffering from economic hardship. The army disgruntled over its loss of prestige and the working poor frightened by the prospect of unemployment.

Mr. Zhirinovskiy's electoral platform calls for three immediate measures: cutting off all aid to former Soviet republics, halting military conversion and fighting crime.

"If we stop delivering gas to Ukraine, then they will be forced to give us back the Crimea," he explained, adding that playing hardball with the former Soviet republics would contribute to the long-term goal of reviving great Russia.

A native of the Azerbaijani capital of Baku, Mr. Zhirinovskiy openly displays his contempt towards "the people from the south" and "other strangers" who he claims have plundered the wealth of the country.

"Foreigners don't want us. They want our territory," he stated.

Considered by many to be a political outcast, the candidate condemns the economic policy of the current government and pejoratively refers to Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar as "that kid".

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

Negative market indicators are negligible

In theory, the peace formula offered by America and Israel should be accompanied by economic prosperity as a sweetener to help swallow the bitter pill.

This is more applicable to Jordan than other Arab parties, due to its geographic proximity, political climate and demographic composition. However, the financial, real-estate and general trade markets gave a negative response after the breakthrough in peace process, namely the Palestinian-Israeli mutual recognition and agreement on principles, the news of which leaked out as of the beginning of September.

Jordanian officials look puzzled. The prime minister denied that the present recession has any real economic justification. His offered explanation is the uncertainty and wait-and-see position taken by businessmen and consumers. He implied that the economic slowdown is simply a temporary phenomenon which will soon go away.

In his turn, the director of Amman Financial Market showed his surprise to the fact that Jordanian investors' behaviour did not respond positively to the progress of peace process.

Al Aswaa, a business daily newspaper, was also surprised that investors' behaviour did not respond to the promised dividends of peace which, in its view, will revitalise the economy and reduce foreign indebtedness, especially that the government granted recently more tax incentives to exports and took other measures to remove distortions and bottlenecks in the real-estate sector.

It seems that the negative market indicators were overread. As a matter of fact, share prices rose in September by 4.5 per cent and declined in October by 1 per cent. The decline in November, until the prime minister's statement was published on Nov. 22, was 3 per cent. All these are normal ups and downs and do not justify the prime minister's intervention and explanation.

The proceeds of the Land and Survey Department in

October were less than the same month of 1992 by only 2 per cent. The alleged slowdown in retail and wholesale trading does not lend itself to accurate measurement due to lack of statistics, but it is a welcome development, if true. One of our structural problems is the inflated consumption and importation. Any reduction in these variables is a positive sign as part of the economic adjustment.

The denial or rejection of negative indicators of the markets is not productive. Market indicators are facts of life which officials should not waste time refuting or explaining away. Market indicators should be understood and acted upon.

What happened in the Amman Financial Market is a substantial decline in the volume of transactions. This decline measures the change in the volume of liquidity available for speculation. It does not measure the state of affairs of the national economy. Decline in the real-estate market was also in volume, not prices. It does not necessarily indicate a reduction of demand due to future lower price expectations, it may indicate a reduction of supply due to future higher price expectations.

The crisis in apartments was a normal result of the building boom which persisted for two years, when construction was running at double the normal level and inevitably created a surplus which will take some time to be absorbed.

The negative market indicators, so far, were limited and negligible. They do not warrant too much attention by the government. The slightly negative response of the market to the acceleration of peace process is not due to lack of information. In fact, when the full scale of information becomes available, the response may be worse. People do not know yet that, as things stand now, Jordan has nothing to gain from peace. The reasons: Israel is too selfish and inflexible, America is taking Jordan for granted, the government is misplaying its cards and giving the impression that Jordan is for peace at any conditions.

King puts country on path towards 'constitutional monarchy'

By Wayne Owens

In focusing on the hope that the Syrians and Israelis can reach an agreement on peace, the world community should appreciate other positive developments in the region and the impact they could have on the peace process. Not the least among these developments were the significant Jordan parliamentary elections two weeks ago.

The importance of the election results goes far beyond the fact that Islamic fundamentalist representation was reduced by one-third, sending a strong signal that Jordanians overwhelmingly support their King's active participation in the peace process. The vote also signalled that Jordanian voters were influenced by their beliefs that, in a country needing jobs and economic growth, fundamentalist parliamentarians "just didn't get it" and had wasted their leadership opportunities trying to force socio-religious standards on their countrymen.

What should be most impressive to western observers is that King Hussein has voluntarily and without pressure, except for his view of history, charted a course to turn his Kingdom into a "constitutional monarchy" with final governing power to ultimately and irrevocably be vested in the Jordanian populace.

King Hussein is perhaps the first absolute monarch in history to prepare a democratic institution to assume governance powers at the height of his own personal popularity. He won a major battle in that direction two weeks ago in Jordan's parliamentary elections when Jordanians demonstrated that they understood their national responsibility by heeding his advice to separate church and state.

The King counselled that religion should not be defiled by politics, not the other way around. But Jordanian voters understood his point and Islamic extremist candidates lost as electors chose an overwhelming majority of peace supporters including, for the first time, a woman. Most of those elected were those who promised change and economic improvements — just like in American elections.

King Hussein has ruled for more than forty years in the small but strategically critical Middle Eastern country whose four million people find themselves in the centre of what is probably the most volatile and dangerous region in the world. This is the place where ultimate religious and economic realities intertwine: three of the world's most powerful religions had their beginnings and find their holiest places here and from here flows the oil upon which the entire world's economy is dependent.

Five wars have been fought in the Middle East over the last half century to settle territorial disagreement, the last bringing 650,000 American

troops to protect the world's mother lode of oil — probably the only place in the world where America would make that effort. In an area less than one half the size of the state of Utah, Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, Syrians and Lebanese must figure out how to trade and cooperate. If they fail, with burgeoning arsenals of nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional weaponry targeted at each other, and ballistic missiles to deliver all four, they face dramatically increasing misery and despair that is far beyond anything suffered in this region where suffering has been a constant companion.

Economic reality and the depth of yearning for peace are finally manifesting themselves, as the Jordanian voters showed.

No Arab leader has been so long and so firmly committed to facing the political and economic realities which dictate the inevitable reconciliation between Arabs and Israel, and, along with it, democratisation as well, as has Jordan's sovereign. In my four-day visit to his country during the final moments of the campaign two weeks ago, I found appreciation for the opportunity to vote, but even more I found a sense of gratitude that their beloved King was trusting them with real power. This is evident from more than just their votes. It was only last year that one-third of the population turned out to welcome him home from treatment at the Mayo Clinic.

I wondered as I listened to the King on election day how many people in history have heard a monarch proclaim: "It is a source of pride to hand over powers to people who are ready to shape their own future."

In movement towards democracy, Jordanians are more advanced than any of their Arab neighbours. Their efforts and attempts in Morocco and in Tunisia, hoped-for reforms in Egypt and elsewhere, and the emerging self-governance by Palestinians in Gaza and in Jericho these developments and the economic activity between Israel and its neighbours which is everywhere being fired — all make it a hopeful season for democracy in this tiny region of historic conflict, which, except for Israel, has been so long totally dominated by authoritarian governments.

For all of this, the world community should take note and view the Jordanian election results as something more than just defeat of fundamentalism. It is an important development that leads to greater hope for the region's prospects.

The writer, a former U.S. Democratic congressman representing the state of Utah, who is currently visiting the Middle East, contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

LETTERS

Who next?

To the Editor:

The plight of the people of Bosnia, a Muslim country without oil, is causing endless ripples of embarrassment to the United States government. Unfortunately, Serbia is not Iraq and Bosnia is not Kuwait and, for all its clout, the United States is unable to muster international unanimity as to what to do next.

The cabal of Bosnia's neighbouring European governments is about to burst at the seams, with glee for some, frustration for others and a general pervasive helplessness — depending! The peace-loving people of the world are by now convinced that Serbia's campaign of "cleansing" Bosnia of its Muslim people should be summarily stopped! The chemical connotation of the act of cleansing is synonymous with the ominous gas ovens of Nazi Germany. The world can no longer afford to tolerate mini-Hitlers to rear their heads.

The United Nations, with all its genuine concern, seems to be lacking the mandate to stop the hemorrhaging of innocent Bosnian blood. While, at best, the U.N. is attempting to pulverise the ills of double standards, it is equally lacking in the sinews of imposition when dealing with human rights. While the Serbs are overtly waging a sectarian war of extermination against the Muslims of Bosnia, the Muslim World, in turn, appears to be rejoicing privately at the possibility of outright military intervention. I say, rejoicing, because the Muslim World, having opted itself for so long with the incantation "Allahu Akbar" seems to be in need of yet another major upheaval to free itself of its present mental stupor and moral paralysis.

If a concerted effort from the Muslim countries — or even from one Muslim country, preferably one of the ex-Soviet Muslim republics — could only be procured to challenge the Slavic Serbs, this would certainly destabilise the support being given to the Slavic Serbs from their erstwhile allies, the Slavs of Russia and Eastern Europe.

Should such a possibility come to pass, this would eventually coalesce the embarrassed U.S. government, the foot-dragging of the United Nations, the frustrations of the European cabal and the peace-loving people of the world and, in particular, the Muslim World, into one cohesive moment akin to that of the coalitionists during the Gulf war.

Short of that, the Serbs, already emboldened by their successes, will have to embark on new cleansing adventures to protect their military and political gains. Hence, who is the next most likely candidate for eventual cleansing? The Muslims of Kosovo, for sure! In the process, this could include the Muslims of Macedonia and Albania. Then, having cleansed Europe of the Muslims of Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania, the question again arises of who is next? The Turkish peninsula of Thrace? That is all that is left. Then what will happen? Nuclear Armageddon between the Muslim East and the Christian West?

Ludwig W. Tamari,
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Costly solace

To the Editor:

The media are known to be open to use by different interests, groups and sectors of society for quite different ends. Together with multiplicity of purpose goes ambiguity of meaning.

Attempts to decode the meaning of content, and to use the result as a criterion of evaluation where the "condolences" section of our newspapers is concerned, reveals rather disappointing social facts about a certain sector of our society. Communicative conduct of individuals who choose to make a statement about their social class, or rather, their bank account, using the condolence section as a means, has to be ethically and morally criticised. Surely, there are more constructive ways to publicise one's bulk of wealth other than taking up a whole page to offer one's condolences. Expressing sympathy should be much more sanctified than advertised, the latter of which has become the case in our newspapers. One's financial situation can be judged by the size and the space one talks in the newspaper to offer solace for the grieving family of the deceased. As if intensity and sincerity of emotions are measured by centimetres.

Feelings of sorrow should be expressed, but when those feelings become commodities, one cannot help but feel that the noblest of all feelings is being trivialised and demeaned. Media should be used as means of public information and instruction and cultural advance. So, let us use it and not abuse it.

Natasha Bukhari,
P.O. Box 364,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

سازمان انتشارات

French ready to pander to Chinese taste for luxury

By Jennifer Genevieve
Reuter

PARIS — French luxury goods firms, purveyors of fine cognac, perfumes and designer labels to the world, are gearing up to indulge China's long-suppressed taste for the good life.

With the Chinese economy set to grow 14 per cent this year, the world's most populous nation is set to become one of the world's biggest markets for French finess and firms like LVMH Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton, Remy Cointreau and L'Oréal stand to benefit.

"China will be the biggest cognac market in the world by the year 2000," said Gilles Hennessy, vice-chairman of the Hennessy Cognac House, which is part of the LVMH group.

As Chinese wages rise and the cost of living remains relatively cheap, other luxury goods are also expected to find outlets as consumers look for ways to pamper themselves.

"In 20 to 30 years, this country should become a country of heavy consumption and a major consumer of quality products," said Yves Carcelle, the chairman of LVMH's baggage and leather goods division, Louis Vuitton.

"It is a strategic market for everyone," added an official at the perfumes and beauty products branch of L'Oréal.

Although his division's sales in China currently equal the turnover of a single U.S. department store, Asian and Pacific sales will eventually make up some 50 per cent of L'Oréal's perfumes and beauty products world sales, compared to 10 to 12 per cent now, he said.

The growth in Southeast Asia will compensate for cur-

rent weak demand in European markets, a spokeswoman at Remy Cointreau's cognac maker Remy Martin added.

"Within 10 to 15 years, the weight of this market will be close to that of Japan," said LVMH Chairman Bernard Arnault recently, adding that LVMH's Chinese sales were

climbing at an impressive 50 to 80 per cent year.

The Chinese have already made themselves known as brandy connoisseurs who drink both XO and top-of-the-range VSOP in the traditional French way, before, during and after meals.

Exports to China amounted

to about 6.25 million bottles last year, according to the French wines and spirits exporters' federation, up 121 per cent from 1991's 2.83 million bottles.

Hennessy said its sales were set to double to more than one million bottles this year, with 20 to 30 per cent sold to local people and the rest to expatriates and tourists.

In 1992, the cognac industry dispatched a total of about 134 million bottles worldwide.

With that prospect in mind, Hennessy is preparing to open its first Chinese representative office in Beijing by the end of the year. The opening of two others in Shanghai and Guangzhou is currently being negotiated, Hennessy said.

LVMH, whose activities also cover haute couture and perfumes, is also planning to open a new Louis Vuitton haggage and leather goods boutique in Shanghai next year after opening its first one in Beijing only last November.

"It is working better than expected. We had forecast local clients to be a minority but 70 per cent of sales come from local clients," said Louis Vuitton's Carcelle.

Asian sales make up 50 per cent of Vuitton's 4.4 billion franc (\$785 million) turnover. Although China sales are still very low it will become the economic driving force of the Asian zone, he said.

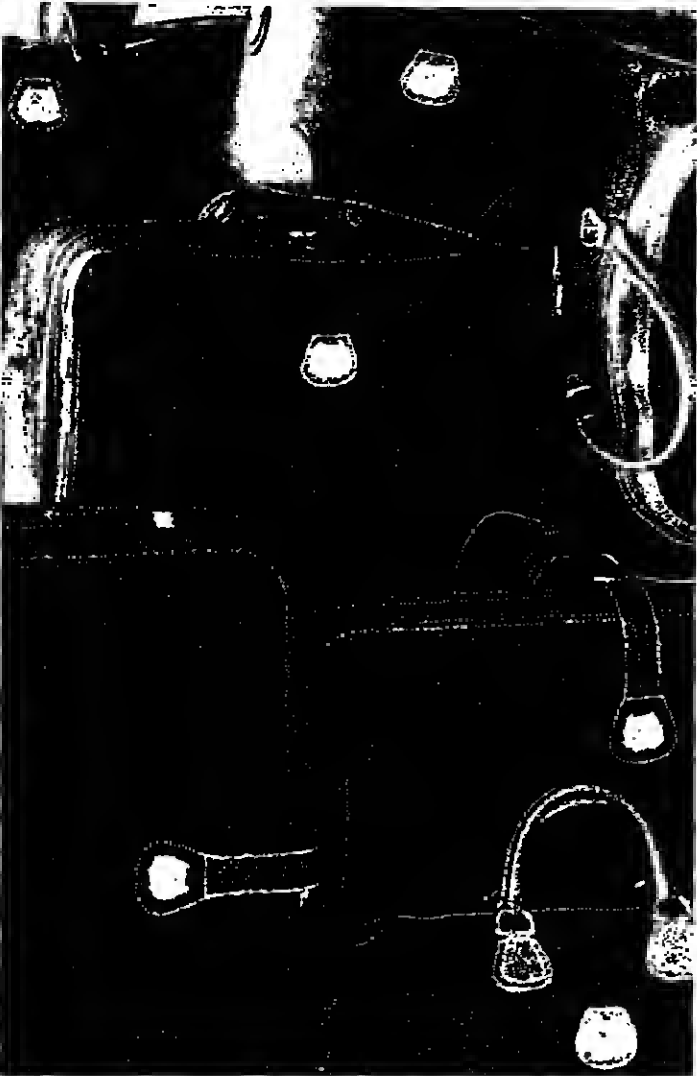
An official responsible for L'Oréal's Lancome brand pointed out that China was only just beginning to become interesting and sales were currently at low levels.

"China is only just starting," he said.

LVMH haute couture houses Christian Dior and Celine will also be opening boutiques in China while L'Oréal plans to create partnerships in order to position itself in the emerging market.

Not all of France's luxury exporters see quite the same opportunities, however.

Hermes, best known for its silk ties and scarves, says it has no plans to try to break into the silkworm's home market.



French finess and firms are set to become best sellers on Chinese markets (file photo)

Tourists fascinated by close-up views of bears

By Yereth Rosen
Reuter

MCNEIL RIVER GAME SANCTUARY, Alaska — Clenching a silvery salmon in its sharp teeth, a large brown bear bounds up a river bank to stare at the people huddled there — then saunters off to enjoy its lunch in peace.

It's a scene that ordinarily would strike terror into human hearts.

But this is no ordinary place. It is the McNeil River game sanctuary, the Alaska state-run home of the world's densest concentration of brown bears, a place where bears pay less attention to human visitors than they do to flocks of seagulls drawn by fish scraps in the river.

Here, the bears that bother looking at people do so only briefly, then go about their business, which is usually dining at the salmon-choked McNeil River.

Strict controls on people — whose visits have been limited under a 20-year-old permit system — have helped make this what experts consider the world's premier site for watching the large coastal grizzlies that Alaskans dub "brownies".

One recent afternoon, some 60 bears were counted either fishing in the river's small waterfalls, sitting on the riverbank gorging on their catches or napping on sun-drenched rocks. Just a few feet away, permit-holding visitors snapped pictures and expressed amazement at the spectacle.

"In my second life, I'm going to be a wildlife photographer," said Jim Davis, a retired Alaska Department of Fish and Game caribou expert from Fairbanks who was manning a tripod-mounted camera and a telephoto lens.

"I'm a wildlife freak. I used to do it professionally and now I just do it for fun," he said.

The McNeil River game sanctuary, run by the Department of Fish and Game, was established by a near-unanimous vote of the Alaska legislature in 1967.

The area's popularity is

growing, mirroring a shift to bear-viewing from bear hunting.

Only 34 per cent of Alaskans have hunted big game in the past five years, according to a poll commissioned by the Alaska Wildlife Alliance Environmental group under 15 per cent of the state's residents now hunt, according to licences tracked by the Department of Fish and Game.

But nearly all of the state's residents actively pursue "wildlife watching," according to a fish and game poll.

Applications for the 185 available McNeil River bear-viewing permits increased this year by about 25 per cent to over 2,000, said fish and game spokesman Bruce Bartley.

That was despite a price hike doubling the application fee to 20 and fees for the winner of permits to 100 for Alaskans and 250 for non-residents from last year's 40, he said.

Brooks Camp, base she for bear-watching in Katmai National Park, has also gained popularity.

Last year the park recorded 14,622 day-visits there, up from 6,396 in 1983, the National Park Service said.

"It's a wonderful place. There are few areas like it in the world, actually," said Rick Potts, Katmai's chief of natural resources.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plans to establish a bear-watching programme in Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, where bears grow huge by munching on plentiful red salmon.

In southeastern Alaska, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service jointly manage a bear-watching programme in the Tongass National Forest. At Pack Creek, a bear-gathering area 50 km south of Juneau, human visits are limited to 24 a day.

And one guiding company in the town of Homer is charging 2,250 a week for boat tours that bring visitors to the bear-packed coastline of Katmai National Park.

Not everybody lauds the

change from hunting to watching. The Alaska Outdoor Council, an organisation of sport fishermen and hunters, last spring passed a resolution opposing new bear-watching areas.

In November, the Alaska board of game will consider a proposal to allow bear-hunting in the newly created game refuge that surrounds the sanctuary.

The refuge was created by the legislature in 1991 to compensate for an enhanced commercial fishery nearby, fed by a new salmon ladder that threatened to draw bears out of the safe zone.

The outdoor council and its supporters point out that hunting occurred in the area before it was declared a refuge, and

argue that the activity should be allowed to continue.

State officials believe that up to three bears a year can be hunted in the refuge without adverse effects on the sanctuary, Mr. Bartley said.

But bear fans fear that a legal hunt there will target animals that have grown up without fear of humans.

"The problem is sometimes viewing and hunting don't mix," said Larry Aumiller, the sanctuary's manager.

"The problem is even if they do revert back to normal wariness, they don't come back. That bear wouldn't be here," Mr. Aumiller said, pointing at a small brownie that had calmly walked past the visitors.

"It'd be in on a floor (as a rug) in Oklahoma or somewhere."



Close-up of polar bear (file photo)

Dubai tries to lure tourists with desert delights

By Diana Abdallah
Reuter

DUBAI — You can camp in the desert, shop in souks for the cheapest gold in the world, play golf, go scuba diving or even wadi bashing.

Wadi bashing? That's when you tear off into the desert in a four-wheel drive vehicle to bounce over sand dunes and dry creek beds.

If it sounds like fun, the Gulf Arab emirate of Dubai is offering all this in a bid to attract tourists.

Although Dubai's tourist industry is still in its infancy, the government hopes it will play a big part in efforts to diversify an economy largely dependent on oil and trade.

"The countries of the region are relative newcomers on the world tourism map and information about leisure travel has been limited until now," said Khalid Bin Sulayem, chief executive of the Dubai Commerce and Tourism Promotion Board set up in 1989.

"We want to promote Dubai as an up-market destination, basically for people who come here for business and could use their time to enjoy what Dubai offers as well," he added.

Sun and sand are plentiful. Certain other requirements of a perfect holiday pose problems.

Outrage when Russian tourists sunbathed topless on a beach raised concern that tourism would conflict with traditions.

The Dubai municipality quickly put up signs near the beach warning tourists to conform to the emirate's dress codes — no bare breasts on the beaches.

Drinking laws are not so

strict as in some Islamic countries but only hotels and some private clubs can serve alcohol and expatriates need a licence from police to buy liquor in shops.

There are limits to what is accepted, Mr. Bin Sulayem said.

"Our traditions are very well known, we have things we accept and other things we don't. We make this clear in our promotion material. At the same time we try to make it enjoyable for tourists to stay here."

Among other attractions are treks and overnight camping in the desert.

Souks, or open-air markets, are treasure troves of gold, silk and spices. Alternatively, there are air-conditioned shopping malls.

International sports events are strongly promoted.

The Dubai creek golf and yacht club, Dubai's latest 18-hole all grass championship course, hosted the Dubai desert classic golf tournament. Dubai has another golf club and a third is under construction.

Dubai also staged world powerboat championships in 1992 and 1993, the Dubai International Rally and an ATP tennis open.

The annual Dubai Exiles Rugby Sevens, which takes place next weekend, draws some of the world's best rugby talent as well as fans — mainly European expatriates — from around the region.

"Sports is attracting people from abroad and it gives the country good exposure overseas. It is contributing in different ways to the promotion of Dubai and the UAE," Mr. Bin Sulayem said.

The main target for Dubai's tourist industry are nationals of other states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman.

"GCC nationals are the most important tourists for us. They are close by, we share language and tradition. They are quite wealthy and they really spend when in Dubai," Mr. Bin Sulayem said.

Despite summer temperatures that soared to 45 degrees centigrade hotels had a good summer season, Mr. Bin Sulayem said.

"We have good indicators on what we achieved."

However, foreigners other than GCC nationals and British citizens need local sponsors to obtain entry visas. Mr. Bin Sulayem said the measures had been eased and foreigners could be sponsored by travel agents or hotels.

Figures on income are still not available.

"We are just at the beginning. For tourism to become a source of income it will take a number of years to know," he said.

"But tourism is already bringing in good business to hotels, travel agents and the retail market."

In the last two months Dubai convinced about 40 German tour operators, 13 in Switzerland and two in Austria to offer package to Dubai, he said.

The tourism board said 205,000 "leisure visitors" came to Dubai in the year ending June 1993. The number of hotels has risen to 164 from 42 a decade ago and leisure visitors accounted for a third of the occupancy.

By Alan Baldwin
Reuter

LONDON — Businessman Leon Andrews-Zannetou believes he has just the place for foreign visitors seeking to trace the steps of their English ancestors.

It is damp, dimly-lit and underground.

Water seeps through narrow brick ventilation tunnels, filled with musty air and mournful voices.

The doors of the house of detention, once known as Clerkenwell Bridewell, creaked open this month as the newest of several "crime attractions" in the capital.

Founded in 1616, and once described as a Victorian clearing-house for crime, the building in its heyday housed tens of thousands of prisoners awaiting trial.

Many convicts were subsequently deported to far-flung colonies such as Australia and New Zealand under the harsh penal laws in force until the mid 19th century.

Now Andrews-Zannetou, a Greek Cypriot-born accountant who once owned the London dungeon south of the River Thames with its gory displays of torture and execution, is waiting for the deportees' descendants to return as tourists.

Some have already been in touch. "Last weekend an Australian lady came in," he said in an interview in his London office, the death mask and plaster hands of Albert Pierrepoint — England's last hangman — carefully arranged on a shelf behind his desk.

"She said she couldn't wait to get there to find out which cell her ancestor was kept in," he said.

The names of many tens of thousands of prisoners are on record, but only about 300 cells remain as a building above ground was knocked down in 1890 to make way for a school.

From 1848 to 1878 the building was the busiest jail in London and the surrounding area a slum. Charles Dickens set much of his novel "Oliver Twist" in nearby Saffron Hill.

Businessman hears clink of money in ancient London jail

"In Clerkenwell there is growing, starving poverty. In Clerkenwell broods the darkest of utter ignorance. In its lanes and alleys the lowest of debauch," wrote a 19th century journalist in the illustrated London News Magazine.

Andrews-Zannetou, who also founded the York dungeon and sees a deterrent — and money — in exhibiting what more sensitive souls might consider of questionable taste, plans to load a computer with the records of every inmate.

"Anyone, even if they don't visit, can phone a number and we will make a printout of the records of their ancestors on the assumption that they give us some details such as the name, address and where they used to be," he said.

"We will provide all the information about how long they spent there, what they ate, what they did."

The basement, which includes the old prison baths and

kitchens, remains intact and parts of it served as a shelter during World War II air raids by German bombers.

Only 13 cells have been fully restored so far, revealing a range of disturbing and badly-spelt graffiti.

"Lord, save us from starvation," pleads one line. "I was born in prison when my mother was doing a month for being drunk... I expect to die in prison," reads another.

When Andrews-Zannetou first inspected the premises, he asked the caretaker of the nearby school to accompany him with his Alsatian. The dog refused, so did the owner.

The entrepreneur went alone, clasping a candle in each hand. "It wasn't very nice," he said succinctly.

His company, House of Detention Ltd, was given a lease to run the cells as a tourist attraction and has completed the first part of the restoration, and embarked on a second.

If the venture is a success, he

plans to expand his underground entertainment business overseas with similar crime attractions in German and French prisons. The vaults under the site of Paris' notorious Bastille are particularly enticing.

Visitors to Clerkenwell are offered "the crime of your life" with some attractions that are clearly aimed at a younger and more ghoulish audience seeking thrills.

Tools of torture lie on the floor of one cell, a model of a cat-huglar lurks in the gloom of another. A doom-laden voice intones solemnly to a background of eerie music.

An exhibition on the methods of capital punishment in use around the world is also planned.

The entrepreneur does not intend to emulate the London

dungeon whose latest themed exhibition "The Jack the Ripper experience" uses mutilated dummies representing the Victorian murderer's female victims as a backdrop for a 20-minute sound and vision show.

Women's groups have criticised the Ripper show as the exploitation of murders for the entertainment of the public.

"The 'coming to life' of Pierrepoint — whose working clothes and flat cap last week hung on a dummy in the corner of Andrews-Zannetou's office — will be one of the main 'attractions' at the House of Detention."

"We are going to have Pierrepoint just basically talking, saying who he is going to execute," he said.

"There's nothing gruesome about that."

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Wadi bashing — one way to entice tourists to the arid desert (file photo)

Jordan Times
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Arab Gulf states set up more firms in industrial drive

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Wealthy Gulf Arab states have set up hundreds of new companies as part of their industrialisation drive to lessen reliance on unstable oil earnings, an official report has said.

Despite the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, some 245 companies were established in 1991 with investments of \$1.09 billion and another 95 firms were set up in 1992 with investments of \$656 million, said the report by the Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consultancy (GOIC).

Until 1992, the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have invested more than \$37 billion in such non-oil industries as chemicals, food, metals, paper, cement, clothes, and textiles and other light products.

"GCC states have stepped up efforts to develop their non-oil industries to lessen dependence on the oil sector, which is characterised with sharp fluctuations in prices and revenues," the Doha-based group said.

Graphics published in the report showed the share of the non-oil industrial sector in the gross domestic product (GDP) jumped to around 11.5 per cent in 1992 from seven per cent in 1986.

Major heralds overhaul of British welfare state

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major, heralding an overhaul of Britain's trend-setting welfare state, Friday backed calls for a more "pay-your-own-way" system.

With the social security budget now taking up more than 30 per cent of government expenditure and the pensioner population set to soar in the 21st century, Mr. Major, 50, warned that one of the cornerstones of British life was ripe for change.

The message from Mr. Major and right-wing Social Security Minister Peter Lilley was a blunt one — Britain had to cut spending to stop falling further into a debt trap.

"It is something that is occurring right the way across the Western world. Europe and beyond Europe. The costs of many aspects of welfare are outstripping economic growth," Mr. Major said.

"What we need to do to maintain the welfare state is to make sure that we concentrate wealth where it really needs to be," he told reporters.

The welfare state has been a major plank of British society since the national insurance act was passed just after World War II and set out a model that other countries have followed.

Britons currently enjoy free or low-cost medical treatment from a national health service and other state benefits include child support, unemployment

Official figures obtained by AFP showed GCC states have 4,000 factories, with around 10,000 products. Non-oil industrial exports have steadily risen over the past decade, reaching around \$8 billion in 1992.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — have used the oil wealth of finance industrialisation. But oil still provides more than 80 per cent of their income as industries have remained restricted to light products and their farm and tourism potential is limited.

GOIC said several industrial projects were underway in the GCC while others were on the cards. They include a steel plant in the UAE with a production capacity of between 700,000 and 800,000 tonnes a year and an ethylene plant with a capacity of 300,000 tonnes a year.

In Saudi Arabia, large funds have been pumped to expand the petrochemical sector and more expansions are planned with the participation of the private sector. Another project includes boosting steel output by 650,000 tonnes.

and invalidity payments.

Mr. Lilley warned that the welfare state could collapse and urged people to make more pension provisions for themselves. "I condemn the formaldehyde tendency, the people who believe you can pick the whole system, not change it," he told British Broadcasting Corporation radio Friday.

He warned that Britain's welfare system "could become overblown and collapse under its own weight. Sweden has seen that problem and they are having to rein back dramatically on the overblown provisions they have made."

Speaking to young Conservatives the previous night, he said: "In the future welfare society which we are building, as the economy grows an increasing share of provision will be made by individuals, families and companies."

Opposition politicians reacted angrily to Mr. Lilley's speech, saying it proved the government was planning sizeable cuts when details of the budget for the coming year are outlined in parliament next Tuesday.

The government faces a public sector borrowing gap that now stands at around £50 billion (\$75 billion).

Labour spokesman Donald Dewar said Mr. Lilley was in danger of turning the welfare state into a stigma-ridden "second-rate safety net."

Tunisia cuts olive oil prices

TUNIS (R) — The Tunisian authorities cut the local retail price of olive oil by 20 per cent Saturday in an attempt to stimulate demand and cut imports of other oils.

Tunisia, the world's second largest exporter and fourth largest producer, has accumulated vast stocks of olive oil and is having trouble selling them because of overproduction in the European Community (EC), the main market for its exports.

An official statement said the new retail price for a litre of bottled extra fine Olive oil was 1.6 dinars (\$1.60), down from two dinars (\$2.00). Prices for low grade oil prices have been reduced by the same production.

Olive oil is still three times more expensive than other vegetable oils but officials say they hope the price cut will raise domestic olive oil consumption to 75,000 tonnes a year from 50,000 tonnes.

North Korea opens door for foreign banks

TOKYO (R) — Cash-strapped North Korea published Friday the next of a new law permitting the establishment of foreign and joint venture banks in the long-reclusive Stalinist state.

The official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said the 32-article law on foreign-invested banks had been adopted Wednesday by the standing committee of the Supreme People's Assembly, the nation's rubber-stamp parliament.

The law comes 13 months after promulgation of the nation's first law on foreign investment, directed in particular at high technology industries.

But few, if any, overseas firms have rushed to invest in North Korea in the intervening period, which has been dominated by a crisis over the North's suspected nuclear weapons plans, a short period of "semi-war" with South Korea and then a ban on foreign visitors.

Malaysia to create an Islamic capital market

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Malaysia is to create an Islamic capital market to complete its plans for a fully-fledged Islamic financial system that will operate alongside a conventional system, a central bank adviser has said.

"We want to create a dual financial system, namely an Islamic financial system that comprises an Islamic banking system and an Islamic capital market operating parallel to the conventional system," said Nor Mohammad Yakop, adviser of Bank Negara, the central bank.

A banking system based on Islamic principles was already

European airlines still taxi towards alliances

AMSTERDAM (R) — Europe's airlines may not again dream up a plan as ambitious as a four-way merger which crashed last week but they must still forge ties and cut costs before the 1990s are out, aviation analysts have said.

"It's inevitable that we will see a continued push for alliances and mergers, probably within the next six months," said James Halstead, aviation analyst at Swiss Bank in London.

Austrian Airlines, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Swissair and Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) last Sunday aborted plans to create Alcazar, a giant, low-cost European airline to rival U.S. and Far Eastern carriers. The project was named after a Spanish fortress with four towers.

Now aviation experts say European carriers are more likely to seek loose alliances than full mergers.

"Concentration will be slower," said Cees Haasnoot of

brokers Kempen and Co. "Merger enthusiasm fades the more unsuccessful attempts you see."

Alcazar was KLM's third bid to merge its way into a stronger position. Talks with British Airways PLC (B.A.) failed last year and negotiations with Belgium's Sabena foundered before that.

But as KLM said Sunday, liberalisation of the European aviation market seems farther off than some had expected. Austrian Airlines and Deutsche Lufthansa A.G. are already talking and Swissair has a range of choices.

European governments are becoming less willing at a time of recession to end all protectionist measures and let flag carriers fly into a completely free market, analysts say.

"You'll only get real liberalisation in 1997," said Mr. Haasnoot. Then the going gets really tough as big U.S. rivals will be able to fly freely in Europe.

"The more Americans can

come to Europe, the more dangerous it will get," said Mr. Haasnoot.

Analysts say time is tight for financially weaker airlines, in particular SAS. One option is for northern Europe to divide into a Germanic axis around Lufthansa, Austrian and maybe Swissair and a Dutch-Scandinavian flank formed by KLM and SAS.

"SAS will clearly be pushing for more talks to find a European partner with a central European location," said Guy Keckwick on Lehman Brother in London.

A Scandinavian-Dutch link would not face a dispute on U.S. partnerships which was what wrecked Alcazar. SAS only has a loose link with continental airlines and not likely to ask KLM to surrender its affiliation with Northwest Airlines.

But KLM might not be interested — and in any case such a link would not yield the same cost reductions as Alcazar.

Top Chinese official explains reform policy

BEIJING (R) — China wants to let most state-owned firms manage themselves Western-style, free of government dictats, under economic reforms that seek to regain falling market share, a top official has said.

But the reforms will stop short of privatising most of the firms, a shortcoming one economist said will make it hard for liberalisation to work.

Wang Zhongyu, head of the State Economic and Trade Commission, told the People's Daily state-sector reform would introduce "the most basic and most important element of competition in our economy."

His lengthy question-and-answer session with People's Daily elaborated on a major policy document issued by the Communist Party a week ago. "In the old planning system, the whole country was one big firm and every company was a factory or workshop of this big firm," Mr. Wang said.

With the reforms, state firms would become more responsible for profits and losses, and less fettered by government control, he said.

The government would regulate the economy by indirect means, rather than by dictat from central planners in Beijing, he explained.

China's lumbering state companies, which employ hundreds of millions and depend on huge subsidies, are a huge hurdle to Beijing's attempts to set its economy on a free market course.

With market-share falling, their inefficient management is clearly not keeping pace with the rest of China's booming economy.

The official Economic Daily reported Wednesday that industrial output by state-owned firms fell in the first 10 months of 1993 to 53.2 per cent of all China's output, against 60.2 per cent last year. Its rate of growth was less than half that of industry in General.

In October, 37.8 per cent of state firms lost money, with losses amounting to 27 billion yuan (\$4.7 billion).

The new aim is for state firms to become legal entities, with responsibility for planning, profits and the use of company assets — although the assets themselves will still be owned by the state.

While bold in Chinese terms, the approach is still a cautious one. One Western diplomat said the government does not want the mass unemployment that resulted from the shock privatisations of eastern Europe.

"The biggest threat to communist rule comes from urban unrest," he said. "This means that reform of state firms must be done gradually to avoid mass unemployment."

Thus, last week's policy document called for sole state control of firms making weapons and other special products, a controlling interest in firms in core sectors, while other firms can be turned into corporate groups.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY NOVEMBER 28, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation.

GENERAL TENDENCIES: The Full Moon in Gemini is accompanied by the Lunar Eclipse setting the stage for a very busy period to come. Try to resolve any differences that have been on hold or problems that you feel are holding you back.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You can look deeply into whatever your activities are at present and come to an intelligent means by which to solve and make those you know happy can bring you rich returns today.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) A good day for introspection and for deciding what you will do to be more in accord with the best plan of action your realise you can follow.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is your day to get rid of accumulated chores that require your own personal attention to free time for some important upcoming use of your time.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) The little thoughtfulness that you can do to prove you a good friend and make those you know happy can bring you rich returns today.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) There are many outside duties or interests to which you can attract your attention and make progress in the world in the world outside activity today.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Preoccupation with any spiritual or mental subjects in which you engage can bring some very desirable answers that can be helpful in your future.

how you can make your life operate on a more satisfying plan from a spiritual standpoint.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Your mind keeps thinking and rethinking about your present financial position which is all right so long you don't take any definite action today.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Matters of a public interest to you, practical as well as more theoretical can be mulled over and over until you come to the common sense answers.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You can consider all aspects of the duties that you have assumed and come to an intelligent means by which to solve and make those you know happy can bring you rich returns today.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Usually and inexpensive pleasures are the best way for you to enjoy yourself and have a good time today and do so with congenial comrades.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Don't let your temper get the best of you or show any irritability at home this day even though you may be sorely tempted to do so at loved ones.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) A very good day for you to concentrate upon where and

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



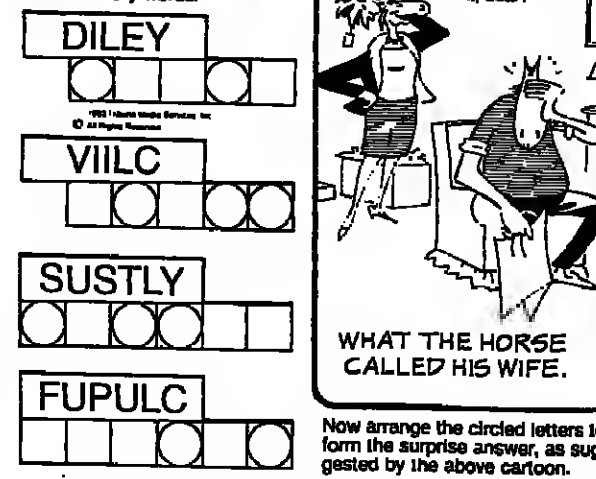
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"I know you don't care for flowers, Stanley, so I brought you a bouquet of junk food!"

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

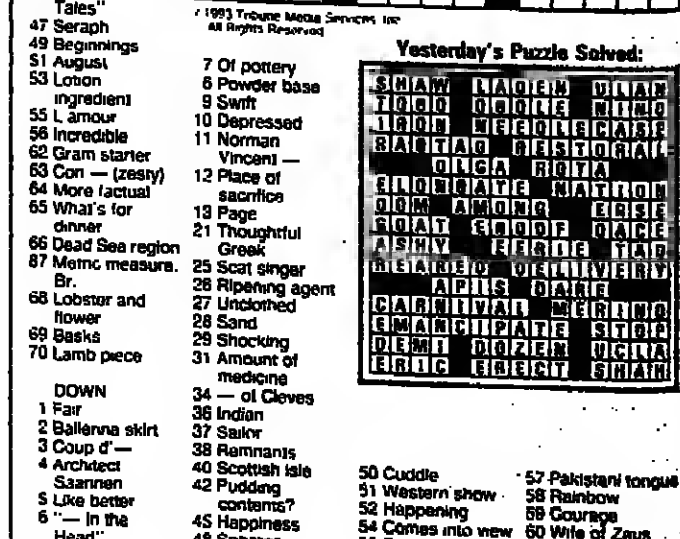
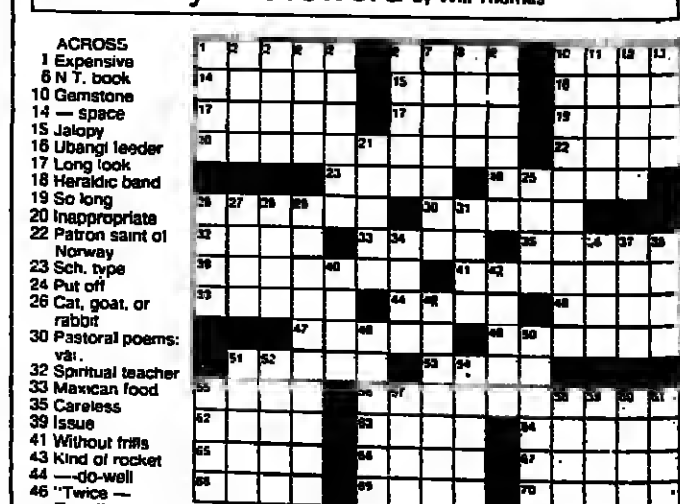
Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: AZURE SHEEP SADIST JACKET
Answer: Why mom throw her book into the garbage — IT WAS "TRASH"

THE Daily Crossword by Will Thomas



JOHN

ary 160.5 points at the end of June. The index dipped to 151.3 in Au-



Currency	Bid	Offer
Rubrahil Dinar	1.8560	1.8630
Lebanese Lira	0.040325	0.041455
Saudi Riyal	0.1816	0.1882
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2200	2.3100
Qatari Riyal	0.1895	0.1919
Emirati Dirham	0.2050	0.2220
Omani Riyal	1.7800	1.8250
I.A.R. Dirham	0.1895	0.1919
Greek Drachma	0.2825	0.3235
Cypriot Pound	1.3385	1.3745

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Yeltsin aide slams allies for back-tracking on reforms

MOSCOW (R) — Russian reform chief Yegor Gaidar Saturday criticised government colleagues for back-tracking on the radical economic measures they had helped implement and accused them of playing "purely political games."

Mr. Gaidar, head of the Russia's Choice electoral bloc, said in the northern mining town of Vorkuta that Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Shokhin and former Foreign Trade Minister Sergei Glazyev were wrong to attack the reforms.

"When people distance themselves from what they had been doing for two years it is simply not right," local journalists quoted him as saying. Mr. Shokhin, for long one of the most reform-minded ministers, is a leader of the moderate Party of Unity and Accord (PRES) and has called several times for the reforms to be slowed down.

Mr. Glazyev, who resigned two months ago and is now a leader of the centrist Democratic Party of Russia, Friday ac-

cused the government of ruining Russia and impoverishing the population.

Labour Minister Gennady Melnikyan, like Mr. Shokhin a member of PRES, criticised the government's tough monetary line aimed at fighting inflation and curbing money supply.

Mr. Gaidar dismissed the criticisms, accusing his colleagues of playing "purely political games."

Ministers are standing for three different parties in the Dec. 12 election for a new parliament and the rivalries have put some strain on the government of President Boris Yeltsin.

Many Russians complain the country has descended into anarchy since the government introduced radical economic reforms almost two years ago. Soaring inflation has wiped out savings, corruption is rampant and the economy is still in crisis.

Mr. Gaidar, in Vorkuta for talks with miners' leaders, said afterwards he hoped a

threatened strike could be avoided.

Miners in Vorkuta and in western Siberia's major Kuzbass Field say they have not been paid for months and have threatened to strike from Dec. 1. They also want compensation for the planned closure of inefficient pits.

"I hope we will be able to avert the strike," said Mr. Gaidar, anxious to avert a stoppage ahead of the elections which miners have threatened to boycott if their demands are not met.

A miners' strike in 1989 brought the Russian economy to its knees and won big concessions for hard-hit miners. A second major strike, in 1991, paved the way to the end of the centralised Soviet economic system.

With just two weeks to go to the elections, party leaders are battling ever more fiercely for votes.

PRES leader Sergei Shakhrai Saturday praised the former Soviet Communist Par-

ty for its ability to maintain order, RIA news agency said.

Mr. Shakhrai told a meeting in the eastern Siberian city of Irkutsk that Russian politicians should make use of the Communists' positive achievements.

"We should return predictability, responsibility and control to the sphere of politics," RIA quoted Mr. Shakhrai as saying.

Gaidar himself Monday suggested the government should take a leaf out of the book of the Soviet Communists and launch a mass propaganda campaign to encourage people to vote for a new draft constitution.

The Soviet Communist Party's ruling organisations were banned in the wake of an abortive hardline coup in 1991.

Since then Mr. Yeltsin has tried hard to eradicate communism and its influence but the party still enjoys some popularity and is tipped to win around 10 per cent of the vote in the elections.

Pakistan opposition flays Bhutto over Kashmir talks with India

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan's main opposition party accused Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Saturday of staging a retreat from the national stand by accepting a proposal for dialogue with India on Kashmir.

The United Nations must be included as a party in any talks on Kashmir, which is "an international issue," former Prime Minister and president of the main opposition Pakistan Muslim League (PML) said in a statement.

The Indian and Pakistani governments said Wednesday they would hold talks in January at foreign minister level in Islamabad under the 1972 bilateral Simla Pact.

The talks will cover "all aspects" of the Kashmir dispute. More than four decades old and which led to two wars between the countries.

Mr. Sharif said the Bhutto government had "reversed Pakistan's long-standing policy" on Kashmir.

The agenda for talks Kashmir should have "only one point. Focussing on fixation of a date for a plebiscite for the Kashmiris under the supervision of the United Nations," he said.

"Kashmiris have been fighting for their right of self-deter-

mination for the last 45 years and therefore the present government should not give any concession to India."

The resolutions adopted by the U.N. after the first India-Pakistan war in 1948 call for a plebiscite in Kashmir to enable its people to choose between union with either Pakistan or India.

A third option — for independence — is advocated by a segment of Kashmiris, represented mainly by Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), one of the militant groups battling the Indian forces in Kashmir.

More than 7,000 people have died in the Indian-controlled southern two thirds of Kashmir since early 1990 in violence linked to the four-year-old separatist campaign there.

New Delhi accuses Pakistan of fueling the Muslim revolt with arms and training to the militants, a charge denied by Islamabad which says it gives only moral and political support for a "legitimate self-determination struggle."

In a separate development, Pakistan, encouraged by signals from Washington, is hopeful that sanctions the United States placed on it because of its nuclear policy will be lifted,

officials said here Saturday.

The U.S. State Department has come to the assessment that extending the sanctions does not "advance" the American nonproliferation objectives in South Asia, a Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

Pakistan welcomes the assessment, the spokesman said, adding that the new government had "persuasively" taken this position with the U.S. administration.

American economic and military assistance to Islamabad was suspended in 1990 under the Pressler Amendment, a U.S. law that bars aid to countries pursuing a weapons-orientated nuclear programme.

Pakistan, maintaining that its nuclear programme is entirely peaceful, has consistently called for a regional nonproliferation agreement, with its rival India being a party to such an arrangement.

The Pakistani spokesman said, after discussions with a U.S. State Department official, that the U.S. Congress, during upcoming consideration of the new Foreign Assistance Act, would determine whether there should be any adjustment in the "proliferation language" specific to Pakistan.

N. Ireland politician prompts ceasefire speculation

LONDON (R) — A Northern Ireland unionist leader prompted speculation Saturday of a possible truce in sectarian violence in the British-ruled province with a statement signalling an important development in the conflict.

James Moynihan said Friday there could be "significant developments over the weekend with regard to the terrorist situation."

He advised the people of Northern Ireland not to jump to conclusions but added that "outline clarification had been obtained and more detailed information should be available by the beginning of the week."

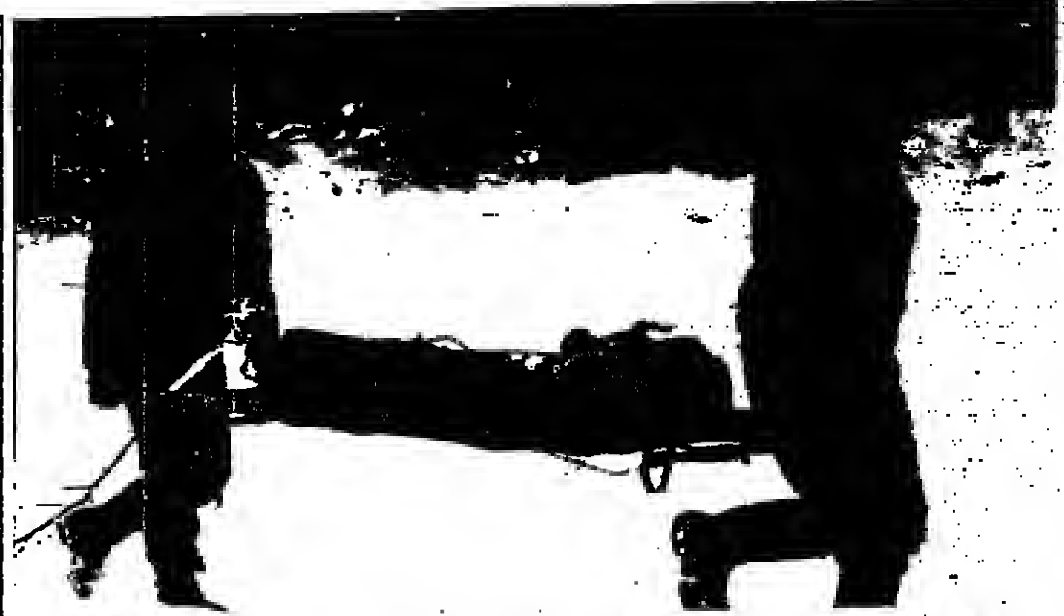
Later a senior member of his party said the move was not earth-shattering but "might get some of our grassroots supporters excited."

Mr. Moynihan said he had briefed his party's executive on the current situation.

Britain's Press Association news agency said Mr. Moynihan's comments had led to mounting speculation that the IRA was about to announce a ceasefire or that Republican and Protestant extremists may end their tit-for-tat killings.

British and Irish leaders tried to reassure Northern Ireland's Protestants earlier this week that they had nothing to fear from peace talks aimed at ending the bloodshed.

British Prime Minister John Major and Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds have both been treating warily. Mr. Reynolds has held out the prospect of Ireland renouncing its claim to the North of the island while Mr. Major has said no one, not even Paisley, can veto the peace process.



Bosnian Serb soldiers carry a wounded man on a stretcher to the frontline in Breko, northern Bosnia (AFP photo)

Bosnian Serbs release aid convoys

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Serbs allowed stalled U.N. aid convoys to head for Sarajevo and the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia with vital supplies Saturday.

Lyndall Sachs, a spokeswoman in Belgrade for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said the convoys were waved across the Bosnian border with Serbia after being refused access Friday.

The Srebrenica convoy was carrying building materials for homes to shelter some of the 50,000 Muslims surrounded by Serbs in the freezing mountain settlement.

Five trucks in the Sarajevo convoy were taking fuel to the Bosnian capital, which has been under Serb siege throughout the Bosnian civil war erupting in April 1992.

The UNHCR has been making a big push to get winter aid to almost three million victims of the war after Muslim, Serb and Croat political leaders agreed to stop harassing the convoys.

U.N. spokesmen said they were still meeting some obstruction by Serbs and Croats which prevented the movement of any aid in central Bosnia Saturday.

U.N. peacekeepers spokesman Bill Aikman linked the continuing problems with the resumption of peace talks be-

tween the warring sides in Geneva Monday and added: "Draw your own conclusions."

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic has insisted he will not accede in Geneva to Muslim demands for more territory unless sanctions against Serbia for its support for Bosnian Serbs were lifted.

He said he would have no objection to the emergence of a Muslim state in Bosnia but urged the Muslims to moderate their claims for more land.

The European Community has suggested the gradual suspension of sanctions imposed on Serbia for its role in the war in Bosnia if the Serbs hand over more territory to the Muslims under a plan to divide Bosnia into three ethnic states.

"Under no circumstances will we allow the results of our struggle to be ruined by the European union's (European Community) ultimatum for additional concessions to the Muslims," Mr. Karadzic said in an interview published by the Yugoslav newspaper Dnevnik.

"The unjust sanctions forced on the Serbian people must be lifted at once if a fair and lasting peace is to be expected in Geneva."

Serbs are waging a diplomatic campaign to influence the timetable for lifting sanctions imposed after Belgrade provided men,

money and munitions to help Bosnian Serbs seize around 70 per cent of Bosnia after it declared independence.

Croat forces in Mostar have intensified attacks on two makeshift bridges spanning the Neretva River in an attempt to cut off about 5,000 Muslims surviving on the west bank of the Bosnian town.

Bosnian army commander Suleiman Budakovic said Croat sniping and shelling was so deadly that civilian traffic across the flimsy bridges had been banned in daylight.

"Our remaining bridges are under constant attack from Croat forces," Commander Budakovic, head of the Fourth Corps of the Muslim-led army, told Reuters.

"The Croat goal is to cut the link between east and west Mostar and ethnically cleanse the Muslims who live on the west bank. But our defence lines are strong. They will never succeed."

More than 50,000 Muslims, many of them refugees, are sandwiched between Serb and Croat forces in the Mostar area, most of them on the east bank of the Neretva.

Hundreds of Muslim soldiers and a few thousand civilians are holding out on the Neretva's west bank, where buildings have been reduced to rubble by months of mortar and artillery fire.

Priest refuses to drive with the devil

MANILA (R) — A Roman Catholic priest has been fined for refusing to use a car plate with the numbers 666, saying they were associated with Satan. Father John Rona, a parish priest in the central province of Cebu, was asked to pay 1,000 pesos (\$35) for refusing to use the license plate. Manila newspapers said Saturday. Fr. Rona cited a verse in the Bible which mentions 666 as "the number of the beast that has come out of the earth," an allusion to the devil, they said.

Needle removed from man's skull after 20 years

BEIJING (AFP) — Doctors have removed a needle from the head of a Chinese man which was stuck there by his sister when he was an infant some 20 years earlier, a news report said Saturday. The 23-year-old man, who was not named, began suffering severe headaches last June. The Tianjin Evening News reported. A private doctor tried massage and acupuncture to relieve the headaches, but in the end of pain got so bad he decided to go to hospital. The report said that X-rays revealed the presence in his skull of a three-centimetre (1.2 inch) needle only two millimetres (less than a tenth of an inch) from his brain. The needle was removed by surgery. Believing the needle had been put there during an acupuncture session, the man began legal proceedings against the private doctor. But a three-month inquiry concluded that the needle had been pushed into his skull when he was two years old by his sister, who was trying to pierce a pimple on his forehead.

Rapper in X-rated movie

NEW YORK (AFP) — Police have seized an X-rated video starring rapper Tupac Shakur, a police source said. The video was found during a search of the 22-year-old Shakur's room last week after he was accused of sexually assaulting a woman and offering her to his friends. The 20-minute video shows Shakur and a young woman engaged in a sex act, said the source. The Daily News quoted a police source as saying the woman looks to be under the influence of drugs or drink and may also be a minor. "She does not look like she's in her right frame of mind," the source told the news. Shakur is at present free on bail after being indicted on sodomy and sex abuse charges. A lawyer for the rap star confirmed that police seized a video when they searched Shakur's room but gave no details of what was on the tape.

Serial killer's art finds its market

NEW YORK (R) — Several original paintings by convicted serial killer John Wayne Gacy were sold at a Manhattan nightclub Friday night for up to \$5,000 each, a club promoter said. Gacy, 53, is on Illinois death row awaiting execution for the murder of 33 boys and young men, many of whose bodies were dug up on the property of the contractor's home. The works were displayed in a one-night show at The Tunnel, a Manhattan nightclub, where promoter Arthur Deco said "several" were sold for anywhere from \$500 to \$5,000, the latter for an oil painting on canvas. Many of the works were self-portraits of Gacy, including some as a clown. Before his capture over a decade ago Gacy sometimes worked children's parties as a clown. Other subjects included Elvis Presley and a sketch of Gacy's house as his yard was being dug up in the search for bodies. Deco said money from the sales will go to a company that acts as an agent for Gacy, who is scheduled for execution by lethal injection next year.

9 kangaroos killed by dogs in Czech zoo

PRAGUE (AFP) — Nine kangaroos at the Jihlava Zoo, 100 kilometres southeast of Prague, were killed last week by two stray dogs, the zoo's director said Saturday. The two dogs wiped out the zoo's stock of kangaroos, killing one male, five female and three babies who were in their mother's pouches, according to zoo Director Vladislav Jirasek. The owner of one of the attacking dogs, a hunk, offered an automatic cash register and a computer to the zoo in compensation for the loss.

Taiwan ruling party wins local polls

TAIPEI (AFP) — The main opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) suffered an embarrassing defeat in Saturday's local elections in which it had boasted of making substantial gains from the ruling Kuomintang (KMT).

The DPP, which said it would win 11 to 13 of the 23 contested seats in the polls for city mayors and county magistrates, won only six seats, one less than in the previous such elections in 1989.

DPP Chairman Hsu Hsin-Liang conceded defeat but refused to see the result as a "big setback."

Mr. Hsu said he and more than 10 other DPP leading members are to resign from party posts Sunday to take responsibility for the defeat.

The DPP had taken a 42 per cent vote share against KMT's 48 per cent, he said, adding that there was "no reason to be pessimistic about our future."

Some 70.68 per cent of the 10.8 million eligible voters cast their ballots.

In similar polls in 1989, the DPP took 37.59 per cent against the KMT's 53.5 per cent.

But the KMT, which had feared defeat in its hardest battle against the opposition, scored an unexpected victory by grabbing 15 of the contested 23 seats.

"It is a great accomplishment of the government's efforts pushing for greater democratisation given the peaceful and rational election process by our voters after an unprecedented heated campaign," said the KMT's James Soong, Taiwan governor and chairman of the Election Committee.

The ruling party, which had fielded 19 nominees and endorsed eight others in the race.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ukraine dismisses Russian threat

KIEV (R) — Ukrainian officials dismissed Russian threats to stop servicing former Soviet missiles on their territory as irresponsible and defended their parliament's stiff conditions for getting rid of nuclear weapons. Yuri Kostenko, head of a parliamentary commission which spent nearly a year examining the START-1 arms treaty before its conditional ratification, accused Russia of using the nuclear issue as an excuse to destabilise Ukraine. "Nuclear weapons are a factor in Ukraine's internal stability. It's hard to imagine an internal conflict here while there are nuclear weapons," he said. Russia's cabinet said earlier that the conditions attached to START-1 by Ukraine's parliament meant Russian maintenance of former Soviet warheads in Ukraine would constitute a violation of the 1968 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Cuban aide: Kennedy killing was plot

HAVANA (R) — A Cuban security official said in a television documentary shown Friday night that U.S. President John F. Kennedy's assassination was part of a wide-ranging conspiracy, and that he was fired on by two Cuban counter-revolutionaries and three Chicago gangsters. It was the first time Cuba has presented such a theory, entering the long-running controversy over the circumstances of Kennedy's death and offering a clear rebuttal to past suggestions that Havana was implicated in the killing. The official Warren Commission probe into the assassination said the president was killed by a lone gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald, and that no evidence of a conspiracy could be found. But General Fabian Escalante Font, an Interior Ministry official, said Cuban investigations showed the plot against Kennedy was far-reaching. "In reality it was a conspiracy of national proportions in which many people knew what was going to happen, while others took charge of pulling the trigger," Gen. Escalante said. "According to investigations carried out, the shots fired in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963 numbered four to five from various positions," he added. He said that "according to our investigations" people who participated in firing the shots included Leonard Patrick, David Yaras and Richard Gaines, whom he said were members of Chicago organised crime syndicates, and Cuban exiles Eladio Del Valle and Herminio Diaz Garcia.

Hitler planned U.S. pact

LONDON (AFP) — Adolf Hitler planned a secret pact with the United States, promising German assistance if President Franklin Roosevelt abandoned Britain, secret documents from World War II showed Saturday. Alarmed by the heavy cost of the German campaign in Russia in early 1942, and fearful of the growth of Japanese power, Germany was considering a volte face similar to the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact in which — after years of hostility — Hitler and Stalin pledged to refrain from aggression against each other. The hitherto secret material, dating from 1941-1942, was among 1,273 files released by the public records office last week as part of a new open government initiative. The Times newspaper reported that British intercepts of Portuguese diplomatic communications in May 1942 brought British wartime Premier Sir Winston Churchill a report warning that Germans feared Japanese expansion.

Indian troops attack Kashmiri militant stronghold

SRINAGAR, India (R) — The Indian army sealed off Sopore in a major operation Saturday to root out separatist militants who had been virtually controlling the Kashmir Valley town, officials said.

Residents said thousands of troops swept into the town of 100,000 people during the night in trucks and armoured personnel carriers.

Militants resisted, using automatic rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, the residents said by telephone.

Officials said at least eight militants were killed and five soldiers and a paramilitary trooper wounded in early clashes during the pre-dawn operation.

Militants said the toll was much higher. A spokesman for the Muslim fundamentalist Hezb-ul-Mujahideen, the strongest militant group in Sopore, alleged that more than 50 people had been killed and that most of the victims were unarmed civilians.

Fire fighters in Srinagar, summer capital of largely Hindu India's only Muslim-majority state, reported at least four hazes in Sopore but said communications had been cut in mid-morning and there was no further information.

Reporters were not allowed into the town, the centre of the valley's important apple industry.

One group was turned back

seven kilometres from Sopore by a paramilitary police officer who said it was too dangerous. "A war-like situation prevails," they quoted him as saying.

By dawn residents said thousands of people had been gathered in open spaces for informers to look at and identify militants.

Such "cordon and search" operations are common in Kashmir, where police and hospitals have reported more than 13,000 deaths in a revolt against Indian rule that erupted four years ago.

Captured militants turned informers, known as cats from the hoods they wear leaving only their eyes visible, are paraded past lines of people to pick out their former comrades.

Sopore, northwest of Srinagar, had been largely under militant control since the paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF) was withdrawn in January after one of its units went on the rampage following a militant attack, more than 50 people were killed.

The army operation in Sopore follows the peaceful end this month of a four-week army siege of Srinagar's Hazratbal Mosque, Kashmir's most sacred Islamic shrine, revered because it contains what is believed to be a hair of the Prophet Mohammad's beard.

The siege trapped some 80

armed separatists and pilgrims inside the white marble mosque on the shores of Srinagar's Dal Lake and provoked a general strike and repeated attempts at protest marches.

The government imposed round-the-clock curfews to curtail the protests, but more than 50 people were killed by BSF troops in the town of Bijbehara.

The Sopore operation suggested that the siege, which ended with the surrender of all those inside the Hazratbal, has boosted government confidence.

The onset of snow and cold weather, which has dampened militant activity in previous winters, may also help the government forces.

Meanwhile, India Saturday started counting votes in crucial regional elections expected to show whether the once seemingly unstoppable Hindu nationalist opposition march to power has been halted.

It was the last stage of five crucial regional elections that could determine the future of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and the Hindu nationalist opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Election officials started counting votes in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh which held polls for state assemblies along with Delhi, voting for an assembly for the first time.

The last of the important states, Madhya Pradesh in central India, staged the second and last phase of its staggered election Saturday. Counting was due to start there Tuesday.

Voting was uncommonly peaceful in Madhya Pradesh, as in the earlier voting elsewhere held under heavy security. Only a handful of people were killed in the five regions compared to scores the last time they voted in 1991.

Trends in all four elections are expected to become clear Sunday.

The BJP ruled all four states, voting over the past three weeks, until Mr. Rao dismissed their governments in the wake of the destruction by Hindu Zealots of a 16th-century mosque in the Uttar Pradesh town of Ayodhya in December 1992. The elections were held to replace the governments.

The demolition set off nationwide violence in which more than 2,000 people were killed, most of them from the 120 million-strong Muslim minority in a largely Hindu nation of 890 million people.

Mr. Rao accused the BJP governments of failing to control the violence and imposed central rule on all four states.

The elections were at first seen as a referendum on the battle between Mr. Rao's secularist Congress Party and the BJP.

Al Wihdat clash with league leaders, Al Arabi, today

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's most prestigious soccer competition — the first division soccer championship — enters its sixth week Sunday when former champions Al Wihdat clash with current league leaders Al Arabi, and titleholders Al Faisali play Al Qadisiyah Monday.

Al Arabi, a lowly team that was on the brink of relegation last year, now leads the standings after a 3-2 win over Sahab earlier in the week. Al Arabi's first goal was scored in the 22nd minute. They consolidated their lead in the 52nd minute before Sahab's ace Mohammad Al Ashbah scored for his team in the 67th minute.

Al Arabi's Ayman Al Omari netted in his team's third goal in the 75th minute, before Al Ashbah scored his second goal five minutes later.

Al Arabi now have 11 points

and will seek to upset Al Wihdat to keep their lead.

Another lowly team, newcomers Al Fuhais, scored a precious victory of their own over bottom-of-the-league Al Baggaa.

Fuhais' goal was scored by a penalty kick, which secured them 5th place in the standings for now.

Al Baggaa will next face Al Ahli and both teams will be aiming for a win to advance their standings.

Current third and fourth placed Al Hussein and Al Faisali played to a goalless draw in a match which saw Fayez Youssef and Subhi Suleiman, both top players of their respective teams, get red card bookings.

Both teams lost some good scoring chances, especially Al Hussein's Aref Hussein, as they settled for 1 point each.

Al Ahli scored their first win of the tournament boosting the

team's morale after several disappointing results.

They handed Al Jazireh their second loss as Al Ahli led 3-0 before Tawfiq Al Saheb scored his team's only goal in the 82nd minute, ending the match 3-1.

Mousa Shteyan opened the

scoring for Al Ahli in the 14th minute. Amer Wali scored the second and third goals in the 54th and 74th minutes, putting the team in sixth place in the standings.

Al Wihdat settled for second place this week after a goalless draw with Al Qadisiyah.

Standings after 5th week

Team	P	W	GD	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Al Arabi	5	3	1	1	1	9	2	11
Al Wihdat	5	3	1	1	1	7	2	10
Al Hussein	5	3	1	1	1	6	2	10
Al Faisali	4	2	1	1	2	7	2	9
Al Fuhais	5	2	1	1	2	5	8	8
Al Ahli	5	1	1	2	2	6	6	7
Al Qadisiyah	5	1	2	1	3	3	7	7
Al Yarmouk	4	1	1	2	2	4	6	5
Al Jazireh	4	1	1	2	2	4	8	4
Al Baggaa	1	1	1	1	3	4	8	3
Al Sahab	5	1	1	1	3	4	8	3
Al Baggaa	4	1	1	1	3	2	6	3

Egyptian coach set for 2nd African triumph

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Egyptian Mahmoud Al-Gohary is poised to become the first coach to lift the African Champions' Cup twice since it was introduced nearly three decades ago.

The former national player guided Al Ahli to the most prestigious African club title in 1982 and his present team, Zamalek, have reached this year's final.

Ironically, Al Ahli won the cup with a 4-1 overall victory over Asante Kotoko of Ghana, the club who host Zamalek Sunday in the first leg in Kumasi.

Gohary is a latecomer to the Zamalek challenge for continental glory, succeeding Scott Dave Mackay several months ago after a series of disappointing domestic results.

Besides establishing Al Ahli as a force in Africa, one-time army officer Gohary steered Egypt to the 1990 World Cup finals during one of several spells as national coach.

Zamalek and Kotoko have clashed once before, with the Egyptians taking a two-goal quarterfinal last year's ago only to be overwhelmed 5-1 in West Africa.

Both teams have been champions twice — Kotoko in 1970 and 1983 and Zamalek in 1984 and 1986 — and whoever succeeds will become only the third club to achieve a hat-trick.

Hafia of Guinea were victorious three times within six years during the 1970s while Canon Yaounde of Cameroon achieved the same feat over a 10-year period from 1971.

The finalists boast powerful line-ups although Zamalek will lack Nabil Mohammad, who is serving an automatic one-match suspension after being sent off in the semifinals.

With home ground advantage and the partisan support of an expected capacity crowd of 80,000, the odds will be on Kotoko to establish a winning

lead ahead of the the return match next month.

Joe Okyere could pose the biggest threat to Zamalek as he scored two of the three goals which sent Zamalek's Nkana Red Devils packing in the quarterfinals.

And Okyere, struck the early goal which paved the way for a dramatic semifinal success over Abidjan club Asec following a six-goal thriller.

After that cup tie, at least 23 people died in football-related violence which split into neighbouring Ivory Coast, prompting Zamalek appeals that the final be switched to the capital Accra.

The African Football Confederation, Cairo-based organisers of the competition, rejected the request despite a history of trouble at matches in Kumasi.

Although Zamalek lost two of their four away ties, the defeats in South Africa and Nigeria were by single goal

margins and, significantly, the Egyptians failed to score only once.

Ayman Mansour is the man deserving closest attention from Kotoko defenders — his five goals have made him the leading Champions' Cup scorer.

A high police presence will keep watch over Sunday's first leg of the African Champions Cup final between Kotoko and Zamalek.

An official of the security services confirmed they would react quickly to any trouble at the match at Kumasi (200km north west of here).

"We are not expecting incidents, but if there is one, we are ready to tackle it quickly and effectively," the official said.

One of the Egyptian delegation, General Abdul Momen Al Hagg, confirmed the 19 players and 13 officials of their party felt "relaxed and safe" at Kumasi.

Sheringham has operation as Spurs injuries continue

LONDON (R) — Tottenham Hotspur and England striker Teddy Sheringham had a two-day operation of his right knee as the club still reeled from the blow of skipper Gary Mabbutt needing surgery for a fractured skull.

And manager Ossie Ardiles, whose team has earned just two points from the last six Premier League matches, admitted he may be forced into the transfer market to replace his injured key players.

Keyhole surgery on Sheringham's damaged right knee — the striker has missed all those last six games in which Spurs have scored just four times — revealed the damage Friday just when he thought he was nearing 100 fitness.

Spurs were unable to estimate a date for his return. Ardiles is hopeful that Mabbutt, despite the nature of his injury, could be back in six weeks, but the manager admitted "it is very difficult to replace players of his ability but it is possible I might have to buy."

Spurs sold Gordon Durie to Glasgow Rangers for £1.5 million (\$2.2 million) last week. "The money from the sale is available to me and I will have

to see what are the priority needs of the squad. We are very stretched," Ardiles said.

Ardiles is having an unwholy run with the signing he has already made for Spurs. Jason Dozzell, from Ipswich, will be missing for a third consecutive game against Queens Park Rangers through an ankle injury, full back David Kerslake has fin while Dean Austin has recovered from a broken leg but probably will not play.

Mabbutt sustained his injury in an aerial collision with Wimbledon's John Fashanu in a 1-1 league draw Wednesday. He later had a metal plate inserted in the side of his face and other surgery to correct damage to the orbit of an eye.

Fashanu Friday disputed Spurs' claims that he had left Mabbutt with a fractured skull. After visiting Mabbutt's bedside the Wimbledon star said: "He told me I must not blame myself because it was a complete accident. To say he has a fractured skull is horrific."

"I was distraught when I heard on the radio that he had a fractured skull. I spoke to both the nurse and the doctor and they have told me that is not the case. "I am a hard but fair player

and I feel upset that Spurs have come out and said it was a fractured skull."

No foul was given by the referee and Mabbutt himself has already publicly absolved Fashanu of any blame.

Fashanu added: "Some of the Tottenham players who have seen it on video have told me I was not to blame. Fortunately we also had a very good referee who, even after seeing the incident on video, has said there was nothing for him to take action about."

His protestations were strongly supported today by Wimbledon manager Joe Kinnear and owner Sam Hamman at a news conference at the club's training ground.

Hamman was particularly furious and stressed: "We know the cheekbone is part of the skull but to a layman a cheekbone is a cheekbone, not a skull. All the reports in the newspapers are over the top. People might think that Gary Mabbutt is having brain surgery."

Later, the surgeon who

operated on Mabbutt confirmed that the injury is officially classified as a fracture of the skull.

Spurs released a further statement revealing that surgeon David James also said the player was lucky he did not lose the sight in his right eye.

Mr. James, a facial and maxillary surgeon who practices at the University College Hospital and Great Ormond Street, had to rebuild fractures of the cheekbone, the eye socket and the floor of the eye-socket.

The Tottenham statement said: "Mr. James, with the use of titanium metal and screws, rebuilt the floor and side of the eye socket as they were fractured in several places. He stated that it was one of the most serious injuries of this type that he has seen."

The statement went on: "Dr. Brian Curtin, Tottenham's medical officer for 30 years and Mr. James both confirm that the injury sustained is classified as a fracture of the skull."

Russians plan Formula 1 track in Kaliningrad

KALININGRAD, Russia (R) — The Baltic city of Kaliningrad announced plans Friday to build Russia's first Formula 1 circuit in a region which was until recently closed to the outside world.

Zelko Ninkov, of the Liechtenstein-based investment company IABC, said: "We are trying to develop motor sport in Russia — not just Formula 1, but also Formula 3000, a truck cup, touring cars, a manufacturers' cup, motorcycles and superbikes. Racing could start in 1997. Kaliningrad City Mayor Vitaly Shipov said city authorities were negotiating with IABC and a consortium of Western investors. He expected construction to begin next May.

Ninkov said the two sides had formally set up a joint venture to start work on the project, which would need to

raise 192 million. "The FIA and FIM are ready to support us with guarantees that this complex will operate. They have to put us on the race schedule," he said.

Kaliningrad city, a drab place badly bombed in World War II, and rebuilt in faceless Soviet style, shows little sign of the glitz and bustle of Western business interests, so sticking to any visitor to Moscow.

"This is the best location for a model, which in future will be developed around Russia," Ninkov said of the former strategic military region, which since opening up in 1991 has sought a niche as an East-West business hub.

Kaliningrad is 40 kms from Russia's westernmost border and plans for the complex include redeveloping the city's small airport.

Maier upstages Wachter in World Cup giant slalom

SANTA CATERINA VAL-FURVA, Italy (R) — Austria's Uli Maier trumped in-form compatriot Anita Wachter and local favourite Deborah Compagnoni to lead a World Cup giant slalom after the first leg Saturday.

Maier, third in a giant slalom here 24 hours earlier, set a blistering pace on the bottom half of the 50-gate Cevedale piste to clock one minute 09.35 seconds.

The Austrian was world super-G champion in 1989 and 1991 but has won only three World Cup races.

Olympic super-G champion Compagnoni, cheered on by a cluster of Italian fans in her home village, took second place, 0.37 of a second behind Maier after posting the fastest intermediate time.

Wachter, who has opened her defence of the overall World Cup title in the perfect manner with two race wins, was a further 0.17 of a second back in third place after a leg raced in watery morning sun-

light.

Sweden's Pernilla Wiberg confirmed her return to form after a serious achilles injury by notching the fourth best time despite the disadvantage of starting outside the leading group.

Wiberg, Olympic champion in the discipline, was challenging for the overall World Cup title last season until the injury in January ruined her hopes.

She punched the air in delight when she saw her time flash up on the scoreboard at the end of the run. She clocked 1:10.24, just ahead of Swiss veteran Vreni Schneider who was fifth in 1:10.27.

"That third place Friday helped boost my confidence for today's race," said Maier, who won gold in super-G in both the 1989 and 1991 World Championships.

"My form is good and I intend to keep the ball rolling as we move towards the Olympics which are the biggest thing

for me this season."

Wachter, faster on the second run, was not particularly disappointed after failing to pull off a hat-trick of wins.

"Above all I'm pleased for Uli (Maier), she said. "I have to accept that I can't always perform at 100 per cent. I'm not a machine."

Wiberg's third place was all the more impressive because she had the disadvantage of her first run of starting at number 20.

She still clocked the fourth best time and was second quickest behind Wachter on the decisive run.

"I feel I have a lot more to give. My injury is something I have put behind me and if anything I feel stronger than before I was hurt," she said.

Wiberg will clearly also be a candidate for Olympic gold in Norway, having already triumphed in the super-G in 1988 as well as winning the giant slalom in Albertville last year.

The home fans were dis-

appointed by the failure of local favourite Deborah Compagnoni to finish on the podium.

Second after the first leg, she skied poorly when the pressure was on and fell back to fourth. "I got tense when I heard the times posted by Wachter and Wiberg and made an incredible series of errors," said the Italian, who grew up in Santa Caterina.

It was another bad day for German Katja Seizinger, World Cup runner-up behind Wachter last year.

Seizinger finished 21st after a bad error on the lower part of the second run. Wachter's 280 points give her an 88-point lead over Maier in the overall World Cup standings with Vreni Schneider of Switzerland third on 175.

Schneider finished fifth Saturday but is the favourite for Sunday's slalom, the final event of this weekend's three-race programme.

Norway starts 75-day torch relay for Olympics

MORGEDAL, Norway (R) — Norway started a 75-day relay Saturday with a flaming torch to be carried by skiers, runners and reindeer sleighs around the nation to the opening ceremony of the Lillehammer Winter Olympics.

Atle Skardal, downhill silver medalist at this year's World Championships and born near Morgedal in the mountains of south Norway, set off on skis on the first leg of the 8,000 kms relay, cheered by about 2,000 people.

"The flame will go round the nation in cold and dark, but

will be met by a warm welcome wherever it goes," said Gerhard Heiberg, president of the Lillehammer Organising Committee. The games start on Feb. 12.

After a dispute with Greece over where the flame for the winter games should be lit, the Norwegian torch will be lit with a flame flown from Olympia in Greece on Feb. 5. Norway calls Morgedal the cradle of modern skiing.

The united flame will be carried to Lillehammer, ending with a ski jumper leaping into

the stadium with the flaming torch at the opening ceremony. A reserve flame will be nearby at all times if anyone slips and the flame goes out.

"The relay is a symbol that the winter games in Lillehammer area are not a regional event but that the whole country is behind it," Culture Minister Aase Kleiveland said.

The 153 cms long wood and aluminium torch will be carried mostly by runners. But skis, reindeer sleighs, boats, helicopters and planes will also be used.

The flame will be flown to a North Sea oil platform and to the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard.

A museum curator, Olav Bekken, lit the flame by rubbing two sticks together around midnight Friday outside Nordheim's cottage. Bekken had won a nationwide stick-rubbing contest.

Norwegians say 4,000 year-old rock carvings in their country show skis in use and they wanted to use stone age methods to light the flame partly to show that skiing has deep roots in Norway.

China's sports stars accused of crimes

BEIJING (R) — China's athletes, pampered champions of the nation's honour, are running foul of the law as sports heroes turn to murder, drugs, gambling and illicit sex, the official China Sports Daily said Saturday.

"Bloody warning": the newspaper screamed in a headline over a commentary on falling morals in one of the world's last surviving socialist sport training programmes.

The newspaper said athletes and coaches had been involved in at least 10 serious criminal cases in recent years, ranging from murdering their trainers to hiring themselves out as vigilantes.

The transformation of sports stars into dangerous thugs should prompt changes in China's training regime, it said.

"Problems exist with our management of athletes and their ideological training," the newspaper said.

Among the bloody incidents catalogued by the paper: — In March, an athlete stabbed his trainer to death in the doorway of a sports school dormitory in Shandong province.

— In 1992, a 10-year-old gymnast in southern Yunnan province was injured by her coach after he botched an attempt to extort money from the local training programme.

— In 1990, a sports trainer was hired to torch the base of a local Communist Party official in Shaanxi province by someone who wanted revenge.

— In 1989, two track-and-field athletes broke into the Wenzhou Hotel in coastal Fujian province and shot five people to death to resolve an argument over a local woman.

The China Sports Daily, the official mouthpiece of China's heavily regimented national sports programme, said the violent episodes were symptomatic of a much wider problem in Chinese athletics.

"In fact, among athletes, there are many cases of smoking, drinking, playing mahjong and gambling," the newspaper said. "Some also fight, argue, steal things and arrange it so men and women live together as couples."

"Some athletes and coaches even take drugs and visit

prostitutes." China's athletes, particularly those who bring home medals from international competitions, are among the most widely celebrated heroes in the country.

Subjected to rigorous selection procedures and then drilled for years in special programmes, the athletes live a life largely sheltered from the rest of society.

Successful champions are usually granted large cash awards and prizes — but can grow up hardly knowing their own parents.

The China Sports Daily said the spread of criminal activity among sports stars was mostly due to "corrupt capitalist things" that have entered the country during its long process of opening to the outside world.

"In this rapidly changing society, some people try to find holes in the law," it said.

The newspaper urged sports authorities to pay closer attention to psychological and ideological training of athletes, and to consider breaking down the barriers between the national world of young sports stars and society at large.

MR. RAJA F. HALAZON, CHAIRMAN AND PROPRIETOR OF TURINO, FLAT O.TEL-SIGNED A CONTRACT APPOINTING MR. GHASSAN AL-KURD AS GENERAL MANAGER. TURINO RUNS THE RECENTLY OPENED "BOUTIQUE" FLAT O.TEL TURINO "CLUB RESTAURANT", "LAVITA" LOUNGE FOR PRIVATE "BOARD ROOM AND SMALL BANQUETING" FACILITY AND THE AWAITED "CHEERS" COFFEESHOP, (EXPECTED TO OPEN SOON).

MR. GHASSAN T. KURD, HAD HELD DIFFERENT POSITIONS, AT THE HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL JORDAN. MR. KURD HOLDS A (BSC) FROM U.S.A AND HAS ATTENDED EXTENSIVE TRAINING COURSES AND WORKSHOPS RELATED TO THE HOTEL INDUSTRY.

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The Amman Bacalaureate School would like to express its thanks to everyone who participated in the Lottery to support the ABS Sports Complex. The winning ticket number was 5595 for the Jordan National Bank, who kindly donated the car to the ABS.

Administration

<p>TOAST</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA</p> <p>JURASSIC PARK</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CONCORD</p> <p>CONCORD '1'</p> <p>Mel Gibson — in FOREVER YOUNG</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>CONCORD '2'</p> <p>THE FUGITIVE</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>PLAZA</p> <p>Mickey Rourke in DESPERATE HOURS</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>Nabil Al Mashini Theatre</p> <p>presents a play entitled: Al Iim Nuron</p> <p>A popular political comedy</p> <p>Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jatajel, Hassan Al Shaer, Fuad Shomail</p> <p>In addition to other comedians</p> <p>Every night at 8:15</p> <p>Tickets are sold all day</p>	<p>Nabil & Hisham's Tel: 621533</p> <p>AHLI THEATRE</p> <p>The political comedy WELCOME ARAB SUMMIT</p> <p>Daily 8:30 p.m.</p> <p>The theatre closes Saturday and Sunday</p> <p>English synopsis available</p>
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwait jails Iraqi and Jordanian

KUWAIT (R) — A Kuwaiti court Saturday sentenced a 19-year-old Iraqi to life imprisonment with hard labour for allegedly spying for Baghdad, the official Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) said. It said the Iraqi, identified as Khaled Rahim Wali, was found guilty of spying for Iraqi intelligence on Kuwaiti military sites on the Iraq-Kuwait border on Aug. 6. Kuwait has almost completed building a ditch and a rampart on the Kuwait side of the 207-kilometre newly-demarcated land border to keep out Iraqi infiltrators. The court also sentenced 50-year-old Jordanian Nasir Mubammad to 10 years in prison and then deportation for allegedly collaborating with the Iraqi 1990-91 occupation authorities. KUNA said, Mr. Mubammad was also accused of writing articles for Iraq's Al Nida newspaper issued in Kuwait after Baghdad's 1990 invasion of the emirate.

Pakistanis freed from Afghan prison

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) — Fourteen Pakistanis returned home Saturday after being released from prison in Afghanistan, where most had been held on suspicion of spying. Two other Pakistanis released last week from the same Sadarat Prison in Kabul, the Afghan capital, said they were systematically tortured during their detention. It was not clear whether any of the 14 also reported being mistreated. The 14 men, picked up at various times over the past nine months, lacked proper travel documents, according to officials in both countries. Afghanistan is mired in a brutal civil war, and officials accused the Pakistani men of spying, though they were never tried. Pakistan was a strong supporter of the guerrilla factions in Afghanistan that ousted the communist government last year. Since then, the factions have been fighting among themselves and remain suspicious of Pakistani support for rivals. Three Pakistani students were detained while travelling in Afghanistan on Sept. 17. One of the students died in custody and the two survivors, who were released last week, complained of torture and a lack of food.

Comoros sets poll dates for fifth time

MORONI (AFP) — President Said Mohammed Djohar of Comoros has decreed that general elections will be held Dec. 12 and 19, the fifth set of dates announced for the polls in six months. The latest announcement, late Friday, follows the naming of a new election commission on Nov. 17 which diplomatic sources said appeared more representative of the country's opposition parties. Sixteen opposition parties had been threatening to boycott the vote if the election commission was not changed. The elections should have been held within 40 days of the dissolution of parliament last June, but have been repeatedly postponed. The president called off the last elections set for Nov. 21 and 28 at the last minute without setting new dates.

Former militia chief tried in absentia

BEIRUT (AFP) — A Lebanese military court has put Etienne Sacre, former head of a right-wing militia, the Guardians of the Cedars, on trial in absentia for alleged collaboration with Israel, Lebanese judicial officials said Saturday. Speaking in his home village Sabab, in Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon, Mr. Sacre rejected the charges, but said he was "proud" of his relations with Israel. "We have been campaigning for 15 years for peace with Israel. We are pioneers. Lebanon wants peace with all countries, including Syria," Mr. Sacre told AFP. The Lebanese authorities have issued a warrant for his arrest. Mr. Sacre was accused of "contacts and collaboration with the Israeli enemy," and of trying to encourage former Lebanese leader General Michel Aoun to contact Israelis and the Jewish lobby in the United States.

Menem inspects Argentine force

SKOURIOTISSA (AP) — Argentine President Carlos Menem on Saturday visited Argentine troops serving with a U.N. force in Cyprus and lauded their dedication to the peacekeeping effort. "Buenos Dias Senor Presidente," (Good Morning Mr. President), the 375 soldiers chanted in unison as Mr. Menem arrived at their camp, accompanied by his daughter, Zulema, and Defence Minister Oscar Camillion, who had previously served as a U.N. envoy to Cyprus. "I am happy to be able to come and visit you following my earlier visit to the Argentine Blue Berets serving in Croatia," Mr. Menem responded. "I congratulate you on your dedication to your duty to maintain peace and prevent bloodshed," he told the soldiers.

12 arrested in Zakho for planting bomb

ZAKHO, Iraq (AFP) — The Kurdish security services have arrested 12 people for attempting to plant explosives in Zakho, northern Iraq, on the orders of the Turkish secret service, a security official said here. The official, who requested anonymity, said the 12 were arrested on Tuesday while they were trying to plant large amounts of explosives in the Zakho hospital and water pumping station. The 12 said under interrogation that they had been working for the Turkish secret service, the official said. One was a Turkish citizen, and the rest were Iraqis from villages near Zakho. They were being held in the central security bureau in Dohuk. The official said they all admitted being recruited by the "Turkoman Brotherhood Party" (TBP), operating from an office in Zakho. They said they were trained by the Turkish secret service in Siraq in southeastern Turkey, before being sent on their mission to Zakho. TBP officials in Zakho said the head of their office, Muhafiz Hahib, was arrested later in the week, but they gave no further details.

Turkey protests Greek minister's outburst

ANKARA (AFP) — The Turkish Foreign Ministry summoned Greece's ambassador here Saturday to complain about anti-Turkish statements made by Greek European Affairs Minister Theodoros Pangalos. Ministry spokesman Ferhat Ataman said Deputy Foreign Minister Tugay Ulucelik met Ambassador Alexandros Filis to demand an explanation for the comments, which included sharp attacks on Turkish policy concerning the Kurds, Cyprus and human rights. At a meeting in Athens Thursday in which Mr. Pangalos outlined his plans for Greece's six-month presidency of the European Community beginning in January, the minister referred among other things to Turkey "dragging its bloodied boots across the carpets of Europe." Referring to the recent visit to Luxembourg of Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin, Mr. Pangalos said he was "forced to sit down" at the same table as Cetin and to listen to him "lie shamelessly" about the Kurdish rebellion in southeastern Turkey. In his statement Saturday, Mr. Ataman said: "International press reports wholly reflect the comments of Mr. Pangalos, they are incompatible with a civilised attitude and minimum standards of diplomatic courtesy. We regret that a member of the Greek government made remarks which were so hostile."

Buthelezi hints at resignation

VRYHEID, South Africa (AFP) — Mangosuthu Buthelezi said Saturday that his time as leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) might be over, on the eve of a crucial meeting of the party's central committee. Chief Buthelezi, who said he was despondent, told a rally in this coal-mining Natal province town that he would ask the decision-making central committee for guidance. The IFP leader has said he would quit if the party decided to contest the first non-racial election on April 27. "I have never had illusions that I am indispensable or irreplaceable. If this is the time for someone else to be at the helm of the IFP leadership, so be it," he said. Chief Buthelezi has rejected the election, stating that the interim constitution under which it is to be fought is fatally flawed, but recently there have been indications that senior IFP leaders favour contesting the poll. (See related story on page 8)

Hundreds of Kurds protest PKK ban

BONN (Agencies) — Hundreds of Kurds demonstrated in several German towns Saturday to protest the banning of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) and some 34 other Kurdish bodies in a crackdown by German authorities.

About 300 people marched in the streets of Frankfurt, in western Germany, and similar numbers turned out in Stuttgart, in the southwest, shouting slogans including "German arms out of Kurdistan."

Kurds maintain that the Turkish army is using German weapons delivered as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in its struggle against the rebel PKK. In Nuremberg, in southern Germany, about 80 people marched in the centre of the town.

The PKK, backed by 11 other organisations, demanded Friday that the ban should be lifted, calling on the German government to "take part in all necessary efforts to stop the violence in Kurdistan."

Germany outlawed the PKK and 34 other militant Kurdish bodies Friday, satisfying the Turkish government which is at war with the armed independence movement.

Germany's move followed a similar crackdown by French authorities last week, who rounded up several Kurds, prompting several days of demonstrations concentrated on Paris.

Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller welcomed the crackdown, which also included the freezing of bank accounts and seizure of mail, as an "important step" in its campaign against the Kurdish separatists.

Some 450,000 Kurds live in Germany, which has some two million Turkish citizen residents, and relations between the Bonn and Ankara governments are close.

PKK members were killed during military operations and clashes in the eastern and southeastern Anatolia region of Turkey Friday, official sources said Saturday.

Eight PKK members were killed in the area of Diyarbakir, Mus and Bingol, according to a statement by the Diyarbakir police.

Seven others were killed during fighting in the eastern regions of Bingol and Tunceli, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported.

This brings the November death toll to 255, including 21 Turkish security force personnel, according to Diyarbakir police statistics. In the meantime, Sevket Epozdemir, president of the pro-Kurd Democratic Party (DEP) in the eastern town of Tatvan, was found assassinated Friday near Guroymak after being kidnapped outside his home Thursday, the pro-Kurd Turkish newspaper Ozgur Gundem reported Saturday.

The Turkish press also reported Saturday that Turkish aircraft raided several PKK camps in Iraqi territory, near the Turkish-Iranian-Iraqi border, Friday. These camps have been used as bases for cross-border attacks against Turkish villages and gendarmerie.

Controversy plagues Palestinian council

TUNIS (AP) — As the time to implement the limited self-rule agreement with Israel approaches, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials are still bickering over how to turn an economic council empowered to oversee reconstruction in the occupied territories.

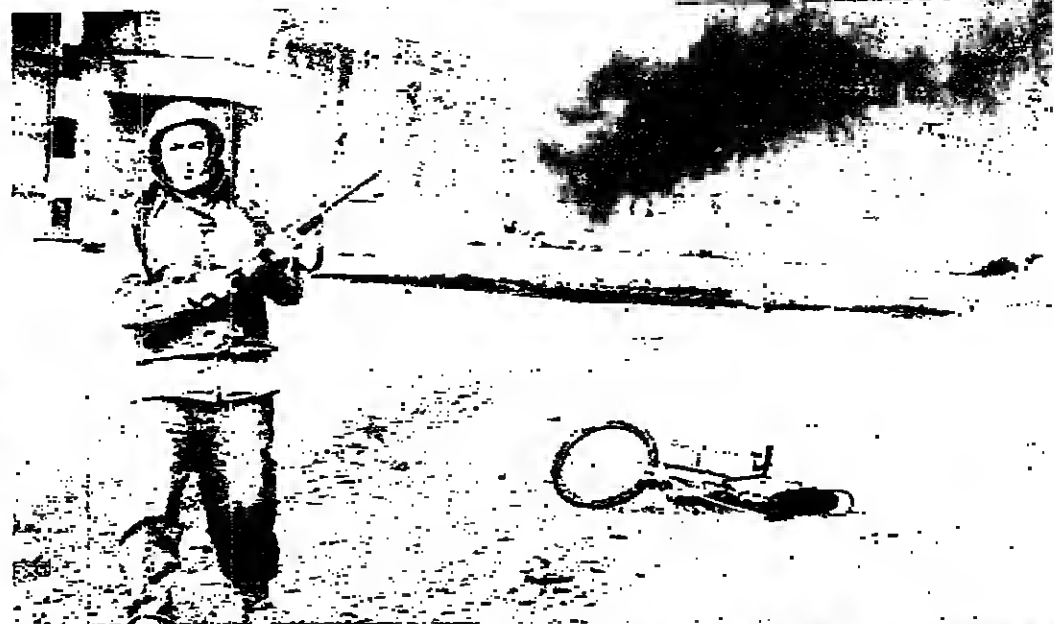
PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat insists he should head the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, but opponents fear his leadership would politicise the council.

The council is shared by aid donors who want efficient, well-defined procedures to ensure proper use of the nearly \$2 billion pledged in aid over the next five years.

The issue will be debated Monday at a full meeting of the PLO Executive Committee.

The council was established this month to supervise international aid sent for the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho after the Israeli withdrawal.

Yousef Sayegh, a Palestinian economist who leads the opposition to Mr. Arafat's leadership of the council, argues people more professional than the politicians, Mr. Arafat has appointed to the council's board of directors are



An Israeli soldier passes through a street in the occupied Gaza Strip during protests Saturday by Palestinians on the third day of a general

strike to protest the killing last Wednesday of a Hamas activist (AFP photo)

PLO faces a test after deploying police — Beilin

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) will be tested when a Palestinian police force is deployed in the occupied territories, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said Saturday.

"For the time being, we can't ask the PLO to impose its authority when it's not even there. But it must prove itself when its police force is deployed to prevent acts of violence," he told Israel Radio.

Mr. Beilin said Israel was living through difficult times ahead of the implementation of the Sept. 13 accord with the PLO on autonomy for the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho but that "we must win the war of nerves launched by opponents of the peace process."

He said it was not a question of listening to Israeli right-wing political groups calling for suspension of bilateral Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, since that would give all kinds of extremists the right to veto the peace.

On Saturday, and for the third day running, Palestinians

in the Gaza Strip observed a general strike called by Fateh, the PLO's mainstream faction, and the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas to protest the killing Wednesday of Hamas' military leader, Imad Akel, by Israeli soldiers.

Israeli troops gunned down another Hamas official on Friday in East Jerusalem.

Both incidents cause widespread protest that in two days took the toll to one Arafah dead and 37 wounded.

The PLO has warned time was running out for the Dec. 13 deadline when Israeli troops are to begin withdrawing from Gaza and Jericho but Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has said the start of the pullout could be delayed.

Police said Friday that a Palestinian killed by troops in the West Bank village of Beit Awva near Hebron on Nov. 8 was suspected of killing an Israeli and several Palestinian collaborators.

Salem Al Sabah allegedly killed Haim Ayubi, the driver of a rightwing rabbi, in the Hebron area on Nov. 7, they said.

Qassam is the military wing

Cairo executes 2 in swift response to Sedki attack

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Egyptian authorities hanged two Islamic activists Saturday in a continuing crackdown on unrest, only two days after an assassination attempt on Prime Minister Atef Sedki.

Mustafa Awani and Mahmoud Salah Fahmi, both Egyptians, had been sentenced to death on Sept. 15 by Cairo's high military court for an attack that killed four people.

The men aimed to kill the high military court's chief justice, Ahmad Abdullah in an attack on July 18, but missed their target and opened fire on an army general, who escaped injury. Four people were killed: A policeman, a passerby and two of the attackers.

The execution, coming only two days after an abortive attack on Dr. Sedki in which one person was killed and 21 injured, demonstrated the authorities' continued determination

to react swiftly and severely to violence by anti-government militants, observers said here.

Both those executed were from hotbeds of fundamentalist unrest in Upper Egypt.

Fahmi, 21, was from the Qusya region of Assiut province, while Awani, 22, hailed from Dairut.

Since October 1992, when trials of militants were transferred to military courts, 38 death sentences have been handed down, compared to one from the state security court.

Saturday's hangings brought to 20 the number of executions of militants in 1993. The last hanging, of three militants, was on Nov. 3.

The ambush of the general for which the two were hanged Saturday looked like a revenge attack. It took place after 14 militants had been hanged and

of the Hamas, which opposes the Israel-PLO peace deal.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat called the assassinations of a number of PLO officials since he signed a pact with Israel in September "the price of peace."

"Many of those who have been assassinated in southern Lebanon and Gaza are my near friends and colleagues," Mr. Arafat told a news conference in Stockholm.

"It is part of the price we are paying for peace," he said.

Palestinian jailed

An Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced a member of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) to life imprisonment seven times over for a series of murders, Palestinian sources said Saturday.

Nasser Al Faadhi, 21, from Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip, was given the life sentences along with 60 more years Friday for killing an Israeli, Simha Levy, at the beginning of 1993 and seven Palestinians he alleged were "collaborators" with the Israeli authorities.

King's Speech from Throne is Cabinet policy

(Continued from page 1)

Meanwhile, in its session Saturday, the House elected six committees to look into contestations of the results of the Nov. 8 elections. The House has received 12 contestations from parliamentary candidates in the districts of Irbid, Karak, Balqa, and Amman's Fourth, Fifth and Sixth (Madaba) districts.

A lengthy debate on whether the deputies from the districts where the results are contested should be allowed to participate in the committee was resolved after Speaker Masri and representatives of the five parliamentary blocs agreed in a meeting that they be excluded.

Lawmakers also elected the House's permanent Finance, Judiciary, Administration and Foreign Affairs Committees.

President of the Finance Committee at the 11th Parliament Abdullah Akaleh and former Minister of Planning and Trade and Industry Abdullah Ensour refused to join the Finance Committee, which would study the 1994 draft budget law before it is presented to the House.

Dr. Akaleh, a member of the (IAF) bloc, and Dr. Ensour, who was also a member of the Finance Committee in the previous parliament, insisted that their names be

dropped from the list of nominees. Deputies had registered the names of possible committee members at the permanent secretariat of the House before the House went into session Saturday. Both Dr. Akaleh and Dr. Ensour were nominated by fellow deputies.

JD 1.487b budget unveiled

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Gammoh outlined the objectives of the government as:

A. To control the general spending and improve revenues to decrease the deficit as a percentage of the gross domestic product.

B. To decrease the capital expenditure on national investments with a target of expanding the participation of the private sector.

C. Continuation of implementing policies of self-reliance through seeking to increase revenues to cover the general and capital expenditures; continuation of implementing the tax collection programme through developing ways and means to improving collection methods and simplifying procedures and expanding the base of taxing and implementing the tax law on sales in the beginning of next

Moderate Islamist kidnapped in Algeria

BLIDA, Algeria (R) — Gunmen in Algeria abducted an Islamist leader, apparently trying to stop moderate Muslims from talking with the authorities, his group said Saturday.

Mohammad Bouslimani, head of the Association for Guidance and Reform and a founder of Islamist party Hamas, was seized Friday in Blida, 50 kilometres south of Algiers. Days earlier the authorities signalled a willingness to talk to Muslim moderates.

It was the first kidnapping of a moderate Islamist leader since the outbreak of violence, blamed by the authorities on Muslim militants, following the January 1992 cancellation of a general election that the fundamentalists looked set to win.

A Bouslimani associate said the group believed the kidnapping was designed to stop Hamas and other moderate Islamic groups from participating in talks with authorities to lead Algeria back to democracy.

"We don't know their identity but given the current political situation, the kidnappers are trying to push us to boycott the dialogue," said the associate, who declined to be named.

He said four men approached Mr. Bouslimani's house on Friday, cut its telephone line and then two armed with sawn-off hunting rifles open the front door.

Mr. Bouslimani's nephew heard the men and shouted to his uncle to flee. The Islamist first tried to telephone for help and, finding the line cut, ran to the kitchen where the gunmen grabbed him.

Mr. Bouslimani was abducted three days after Algeria's presidency, the five-member High Council of State, offered an olive branch to moderate Islamists, saying it was willing to talk to anyone who respected the law.

"The High Council of State... reaffirms its readiness to see integrated into organised political society those elements who respect the law and have not taken part in the dialogue so far," the presidency said in a statement Tuesday. The presidency, known by its French acronym HCE, is directing a process of dialogue with political parties and other groups to seek a path back to democracy after a transition period.

A round of talks with five parties, including Hamas, began on Saturday.

In August gunmen killed former Prime Minister Kasdi Merbah, the first member of the opposition to have publicly urged Muslim militants to lay down their arms and talk with the authorities.

Mr. Merbah's son, brother, driver and bodyguard were all killed in that attack.

Algeria has been racked by violence since the January 1992 cancellation of elections in which the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front had taken a huge first-round lead. More than 1,600 Algerians have been killed since, as well as seven foreigners.

The FIS was subsequently banned.

Cambodians celebrate water festival

PHNOM PENH (R) — King Norodom Sihanouk used the start of Cambodia's colourful Water Festival Saturday to appeal to his government not to arrest journalists who criticise him. Information Minister Ieng Mouly had earlier said journalists writing unfavourable articles about the king would face arrest. The capital Phnom Penh ground to a standstill as thousands of residents flocked to the riverside outside the royal palace to watch the start of the colourful festival, Bun Umtoak. The highlight of the three-day festivities, revived in 1991 after being outlawed during the 1975 to 1979 Khmer Rouge reign of terror, is the dragon boat races on the Tonle Sap River. Before the races began loudspeakers broadcast a message from the head of state, who is being treated for cancer in a Beijing hospital, requesting the authorities not to detain critical journalists. "I would like to ask the royal government of Cambodia not to arrest any journalist who is guilty of criticising me, Norodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia," state radio quoted the 71-year-old monarch as saying. The festival celebrates the changing of direction of the Tonle Sap River and the vital role of water in Khmer life. National Assembly President Chea Sim said the event "attested to the well-being of Cambodian society."

Indonesia foils fossil smuggling attempt

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesian customs officials have foiled an attempt to smuggle fossils overseas by post, the official Antara News Agency said Saturday. Some of the six parcels containing the fossils were bound for Washington. Customs officials said. "The contents are still being examined. We became suspicious because the parcels were very heavy," said one official, who alleged that the sender had tried to forge documents on the contents. He gave no details of the planned shipment from Yogyakarta, a central Java city about 80 kilometres from Sangiran, where "Java man" remains were first identified 101 years ago. Convicted fossil smugglers face jail terms of five years or more in Indonesia. Indonesian sensitivity on fossils was highlighted this month when U.S. anthropologist Donald Tyler, 39, was briefly prevented from leaving the country. Tyler, professor of anthropology at the University of Idaho, eventually left on Nov. 20. He had been embroiled in a controversy over a cranial fossil found in Sangiran.

U.K. minister declares war on truancy

LONDON (AFP) — British Education Minister John Patten pledged to launch an initiative to combat truancy, a problem given graphic prominence by the young killers of toddler James Bulger who should have been in class when they abducted their victim. In a speech in the central town of Troweston, Mr. Patten said school authorities and police were no longer able to cope on their own with the rising wave of truancy in Britain. Speaking two days after 11-year-olds Robert Thompson and Jon Venables were convicted of the two-year-old boy's kidnapping and murder last February, Patten. Backed the introduction of anti-truancy community watch groups comprising shopkeepers, bus drivers and park-keepers. "Every day in this country, many thousands of children, some as young as seven and eight, play truant from our schools," Patten said. He added: "It is clear... that for some, a life of truancy can all too quickly turn into a life of crime."

I am Jesus, says pope attacker

VATICAN CITY (AFP) — Ali Agca, the Turk who tried to kill the Pope in 1981, claims he is the reincarnation of Jesus Christ in a book which he has written in prison, his lawyer said. "I am absolutely certain that I am the new messiah," he writes in the largely autobiographical book, to be called "I, Jesus Christ," lawyer Marina Magistrelli quoted from an extract. Mr. Agca was jailed for life after shooting the Pope in Saint Peter's Square on May 13, 1981.